

# THE GRAMOPHONE

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## APOLOGIES AND CONGRATULATIONS

THE Editor's recent visit to London was something of a fiasco. He had hardly begun to fulfil the long list of his engagements when he succumbed to influenza in a virulent form, and as soon as he was well enough to be moved he went back to the Channel Islands. Before going he desired to express to the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE his very real regret that he could not attend the meeting at Murdoch's Salons nor write his intended contribution to the March number. Next month he hopes to make up for lost time.

Meanwhile the Beethoven Centenary is near at hand, and all over this country and over America gigantic efforts are being made to celebrate the event worthily. The little book issued by the Royal Philharmonic Society, which will perform the Beethoven Mass at the Albert Hall on the 24th, is a timely reminder of the close connection between the composer and the Society which performed the *Eroica* at its first concert in 1813, and the *Choral Symphony* in 1825 for the first time in England, and which sent £100 to assist the composer in his last illness.

These are honourable memories; but no less honourable in the musical history of our country is the present effort of the Gramophone Company and the Columbia Company to make the works of Beethoven familiar in every home throughout the world where a gramophone is available. This month marks without doubt the highest point yet reached by the recording companies: *hoc erat in votis*—and yet space prevents us from giving in the review pages of this month and next more than a cursory survey of the stupendous output of Beethoven records. With the coloured portrait of the composer in the Christmas Number we tried to strike the note for this year, and in the diapason of response we are content to be little more than members of the audience, applauding.

One other event deserves the same kind of applause. The South Place Sunday Popular Concerts represent the kind of music and the kind of audience for which THE GRAMOPHONE stands, and the Thousandth Concert which took place on February 20th seemed to be an epitome of the real music-love of London during the last forty years.



# THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

## The Singing of Lieder—III.

SCHUBERT (*concluded*).

N.B.—It may be well to repeat that these pieces are being dealt with in alphabetical order, and that an asterisk after a title or number indicates that the disc has already been mentioned when noticing the record on the other side.

I resume the Schubert *Lieder* with *Der Sieg*, a fine example (Polydor 62519) of the composer's early manner, written in 1814 to words by Mayrhofer. It requires dignity as well as feeling, and both are supplied by Josef Groenen, the chief basso at the Vienna Opera House. His voice has an uncommon quality and it records exceedingly well.

*Der Tod und das Mädchen* is best known, perhaps, as the song upon which Schubert based the slow movement of the lovely quartet in D minor, which he wrote in 1826, two years before he died. It ought to be equally well known for its own sake, having regard to the beauty of the soothing, hymn-like theme (it accompanies Death's reply to the Maiden's protest) and the weird atmosphere of this simple setting of Claudius's lines. As for its interpretation, the principal effect lies in the strong contrast that has to be made between the two voices—the pleading urgency of the Maiden followed by the consoling and anything but alarming assurance that she will soon be asleep in the arms of Death. The contrast should be felt in the manner of the singer more even than the tone, for, of course, the female voice cannot be made to sound exactly like a man's. In this respect the effort of Leila Megane (singing in English) is discreet and intelligent (H.M.V., E.396), while her voice is very pleasing. On the other hand, Klara Czery (Polydor 62527) attempts the precise impossibility I have indicated by bringing her "open" chest notes into play immediately after a weak start on the medium. Best of a group of three is another German rendering by Elena Gerhardt (Vocalion B.3107), who simply broadens out for "der Tod" and makes no attempt to overdo or falsify her tone anywhere. Altogether the record is quite artistically done.

*Dem Unendlichen*, a noble, dignified setting of Klopstock's lines, belongs to Schubert's "banner" song-year (1815), and excellently well is it sung by Jenny Sonnenberg (Polydor 66081), who enters thoroughly into the spirit of it. No less worthy of praise is Sigrid Onegin's reading of *Verklärung* (\*Polydor 72921), the words of which were by

Pope, translated into German by Herder and set to music in 1813. The sole blemish here is an excess of *portamento*; the singer's tone is wonderfully luscious and expressive.

We come now to that glorious song *Der Wanderer*, the music of which Schubert, greatly inspired, wrote down in a single night to Schlegel's fine words in 1819. It was the first of his *Lieder* that I ever accompanied—perhaps ever heard—and I venerate it accordingly. Nothing could depict more graphically in the simplest phrases the unsatisfied longing of a weary soul for peace and companionship in the lost native land. I have only the English versions here sung by Eric Marshall (H.M.V., D.1022) and Robert Radford (H.M.V., D.272), whereof the latter comes nearest to realizing both vocally and spiritually the disappointment and despair of the Wanderer who has gone astray. It suits his genuine bass voice, and, though a little hurried in the slower passages, is marked by broad phrasing, clear enunciation, and a resonant descent into the ledger lines below the bass clef at the end. This is precisely what the baritone singer is unable to manage, and his effort fails to come off in consequence. Besides, his voice sounds dreary and miserable, and that, after all, is not essentially the quality that conveys the idea of yearning so much as of fatigue after a long journey. Why not have expressed both by a judicious admixture of animation and colour?

The charming *Wiegenlied* (*Cradle Song*), words by Claudius, Op. 98, No. 2, was written in 1816, and must not be confused with the later one, Op. 105, published in 1828. It is generally sung by a mezzo-soprano and suits Olga Haley perfectly (Vocalion X.9727), though her tempo is too fast. Her German, as usual, is irreproachable; but next time she records the *Wiegenlied* she might do so in her own tongue, and if so try a simple version that I know of in the series of *Lieder in English*, published by Metzler. It has been very sweetly done by Emmy Bettendorf (Parlophone E.10399), who takes it at just the right speed; but unluckily the record is a feeble thing, with a piano accompaniment that emulates the proverbial tin kettle. The exceptional tone of Josef Groenen comes out with the same impressive effect in *Das Wirtshaus* (\*Polydor 62519) as in the song above noticed on the same disc. This is one of the *Winterreise* group and better known on the continent than here.



Who, though, is not acquainted, if a Schubert-lover, with the delicious *Wohin?*—one of the gems of the *Schöne Müllerin* series, Op. 25 (1823)? The literal translation of the title is *Whither?* and it begins "I heard a brooklet rushing." The five records I have tried are all from what I may term "aristocratic" sources, and it is a somewhat invidious job to differentiate between them, for each has a special quality of some sort to recommend it. The Frieda Hempel (H.M.V., DA.634) is fluent, fresh, bright, and clear, like the "rushing brooklet" itself; tempo traditionally just right. Elena Gerhardt (H.M.V., DA.706) is quicker, but not much; also singularly neat and crisp—perhaps a trifle too crisp. There is a *hiatus* between the notes that makes them staccato, which the composer does not seem to have intended. Claire Dux (\*Polydor 70688) adopts the same brisk tempo as Frieda Hempel, with greater volume of tone and a smoother *legato*, very distinct enunciation, ample contrast, and a nice *diminuendo* at the end. Altogether as good a record as she has made that I know of. Olga Haley (Vocalion R.6143) sings in English here, a very careful, easy, precise rendering of the tripping melody, with faultless rhythm. The vocal tone is pure and musical, though a shade too sad for the song, which is surely meant to reflect brightness and sparkle in the voice-part as much as in the "rushing" accompaniment. Emmy Bettendorf (\*Polydor E.10399) does likewise in her German version, which is very graceful and flowing and full of yearning, but without much tone.

With this I conclude my review of the available Schubert *Lieder*. I have since received a record by Fritz Soot (Polydor 62551) of *Die Forelle* and *Der Musensohn*, which, if not of the very highest class, comes very near to that category. The young Berlin tenor gave, I remember, a capital impersonation of one of the *Nibelungen* heroes at Covent Garden two years ago. His agreeable voice comes out well in both of these songs, particularly in a vivacious and rhythmical delivery of the "Trout" melody. He makes it "snappy" but not too staccato.

I thank R. W. S. (Hull) and R. E. G. (Victoria Street) for their appreciative letters on the subject of these *Lieder* articles and am sorry that I have not space to deal separately with the Schumann-Heink and other fine records, now practically unobtainable, that they name.

#### SCHUMANN.

Born at Zwickau, in Saxony, on June 8th, 1810, Robert Schumann wrote for the piano only, bar one unedited symphony, until he was thirty. Then he courted and married Clara Wieck—best known to us as the gifted pianist, Mme. Clara Schumann—and forthwith turned his attention to song-writing. Just as 1815 was Schubert's most prolific year, so

was 1840 Schumann's. In it he composed at least one hundred songs, therewith carrying on and developing the Romantic side of the art of *Lieder* composition that had had its foundations in the genius and lifework of the Viennese master. So much did he enjoy this kind of work, so closely did he devote himself to it for the twelvemonth in question, that he then lay down his pen and said, "I cannot promise that I shall produce anything further in the way of songs, and I am satisfied with what I have done." But after a while impulse and inspiration were rekindled, and he was yet to achieve some of his best things in this direction. The extent of his total product was, indeed, amazing, and, as regards its beauty, its originality, its precious musical value, one feels that it would be an impertinence to add another word. My sole desire is to see the gramophone become the medium for making the Schumann *Lieder* far more familiar to British ears than they are at the present time. As yet, the number of records available for the purpose is ridiculously small.

Schumann wrote his finest, most moving songs at the time when he was most deeply in love; which was, perhaps, no more than natural. The spirit of Romanticism was strong within him, and it pervaded all that he wrote—music, essays, criticism, everything. Hence the Schumann hall-mark, which you do not see but hear, and can no more mistake in his pianoforte and vocal compositions than you could mistake the distinguishing mark (once you know it) upon a piece of old silver plate. Keeping to alphabetical order, I begin with the calm, suave *Abendlied* or *Evening Song*, words by Heine, which Joachim helped to make known by his paraphrase for the violin. But I confess to being unacquainted with the arrangement for soprano, violin *obbligato*, and organ presented by Claire Dux (Clifophone 10205) in the high key of D flat. It differs in many respects from the original song, and only a singer of this calibre could safely tackle it or make it sound so beautiful in such lofty regions. She sings only one of the two verses, but, all said and done, I prefer to hear it rendered by a contralto or a low baritone. For instance, it would exactly suit Theodor Scheidl, who displays just the right quality of sadness and restrained emotion in *Auf das Trinkglas eines verstorbenen Freunde* (Polydor 66143). This embodies the reflections of one who gazes upon the drinking-glass of a dead friend—a rather morbid song, the latter half of which atones by its profound mysticism and harmonic beauty for the dullness of the first part. Both these are good records.

Heine's famous poem, *Du bist wie eine Blume*, has no lovelier setting—and there are many—than this of Schumann's in the series of 26 songs entitled "*Myrthen*," Op. 25. It has been recorded by Otto Wolf and Josef Groenen, but at the moment I



have only that of Eric Marshall (H.M.V., E.433), which leaves much to be desired alike for the German accent and the colourless vocal concept of the music. It is also transposed from A flat down to E flat, which is a trifle too far away. But what a heavenly melody it is! *Du meine Seele* (or *Widmung*) is the first of the same "Myrthen" set, written to words by Rückert in 1840, and justly enjoys its reputation as a glorious song. Frieda Hempel (H.M.V., D.A.557) takes it a semitone higher and a shade slower than usual, but sings it with all the essential warmth and more than her customary richness of tone. It stands among her most artistic efforts, and it makes me wonder whether she has ever thought of recording that most delicious *Lied*, *Aufträge*, which should suit her to perfection. Has anyone done it?

Among the song-cycles, we are promised the *Dichterliebe* complete (and I hope it will be sung as it deserves to be), but meanwhile the only available set is the masterly one known as *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Op. 42, which Schumann wrote in the same productive year (1840) to the text of A. von Chamisso. The eight songs are recorded by that gifted mezzo-soprano, Julia Culp (Odeon, X.52948-55), one on each side of four 10 in. discs. All are so artistically sung that I can hardly praise one more than another. The only serious blemish on the perfection of Julia Culp's art concerns neither tone nor phrasing, but the audible gasp with which she takes a quick breath. She realises with rarest feeling the intensity of the woman's love, and her limitless adoration for the miraculous kind of man—truly the *herrlichste von allen*—whom the poet has here depicted, which makes the touching finale doubly sad. The voice comes out well in all this, but I regret to say that the accompaniments are badly played on a dreadful piano; one vibrates with human happiness, the other with a jarring sound of thin wires.

*Frühlingsfahrt*, one of the *Romanzen und Balladen*, Op. 45, neatly sung by Fritz Soot (Polydor 62551), must of course not be confused with the well-known *Frühlingsnacht* nor with the less familiar *Frühlingsgruss*. The former is one of the *Liederkreis*, Op. 39, words by von Eichendorff, and can be recognized at once by its extraordinary contrast between the rapid triplets of the accompaniment and the subdued passionate melody of the air. It is sung in the original key by Sigrid Onegin (Polydor 70638), whose tone is always enchanting, but here loses the necessary passion through the tempo being too slow. The *Frühlingsgruss* is a song rather of the *Volkslied* description in the *Lieder-Album*, Op. 79, No. 4, all three verses being alike. Its simple character doubtless appealed to poor Evan Williams (H.M.V., D.A.395), who often sang it in English (as he does here) under the title of *Return of Spring*. His pure tenor sounds charming in it. By the way, Sigrid

Onegin also records (\*Polydor 70638) *Ins Freie*, from the "Sechs Gesänge," Op. 89, a jubilant setting that fits her exactly. But it is a pity that, with that easy tone of hers, she is so much inclined to slur and "scoop."

*Die Lotosblume* ("Myrthen") is one of those gems wherein poetry (Heine) and music alike create the perfect alliance, and several artists have recorded it abroad. Here it is associated by Eric Marshall (H.M.V., E.433) with *Du bist wie eine Blume* and is on the whole the better interpreted of the two. For sheer beauty of tone, however, I recommend Sigrid Onegin (Clifto-Brunswick 10213B.), who understands the art of modulating her opulent chest and medium notes even more than probing the depths of Heine's verse. With the aid of an orchestra she enlarges her lotus-flower into a huge magnolia blossom. *Love when I gaze* is an English version of *Wenn ich in deine Augen seh*, and No. 4 of the *Dichterliebe* or story of the Poet's love as told by Heine. It is nicely sung by Roy Henderson (Vocalion K.05250) and shares a disc with Henschel's effective *Morning Hymn*. Some day the singer will infuse into it that deeper tinge of pathos which his fine organ at present lacks. Just the contrary is the case in Elena Gerhardt's rendering of the lovely *Der Nussbaum* (\*Vocalion A.0215)—another "pearl of price" from the "Myrthen." Here I find the gifted *Liedersängerin* putting into the song more emotion than it calls for; gracious and suave it certainly is, but surely a trifle over-sentimentalized for the simple secrets that the walnut-tree imparts to the maiden! Otherwise it is beyond criticism. There are half a dozen other German records of the *Nussbaum* concerning which I am unable to speak, but only a single English version that I can mention here, viz., *The Hazel-tree*, sung by Elsie Francis-Fisher (Aco G.15937). This is so like Elena Gerhardt's in its solemnity and deliberation that I could almost vow the one had been made a model for the other. In any case I do not think either manner correct; but apart from that there is no fault to be found. The English singer has an uncommonly sympathetic voice, and sings the *legato* phrases in graceful fashion.

I come now to another "adaptation" bearing the seal of approval of that arch-transgressor, Claire Dux. Schumann wrote some hundreds of songs—none of them "unvocal" in the hands of an artist—and it is simply unpardonable, to my thinking, that any German singer should go out of her way to record "arrangements" which the composer himself would never have tolerated for a moment. Everyone knows the beautiful *Träumerei*, of course, and hitherto I have always thought it to be one of the seventeen "Albumblätter" for piano alone. (If I am wrong I apologize, but I don't think I am.) Anyhow, it is here presented by Claire Dux (*vide* the *Abendlied*) in the form of a song, with specially-written



words and brought out in that illegitimate form by the Brunswick-Cliftophone (\*10249A) without a word of explanation on the label. To make matters worse, the melody of *Träumerei* is not really suitable for vocal purposes; some of the intervals are badly slurred, and the singer is projected into her head register too frequently and too long. Altogether it is not an achievement to be proud of.

*The Two Grenadiers* (*Die beiden Grenadiere*) is in this country the most popular of all Schumann's songs. Composed in the supreme vintage-year of 1840, it is No. 1 of the set of "Romanzen und Balladen," Op. 49, and I scarcely need add that the words are from the pen of that extraordinary genius, Heinrich Heine. I presume it was the musician who first conceived the idea of wedding the last part of the poem to the tune of the *Marseillaise*; anyhow, it was assuredly a "happy thought" and has no doubt contributed largely to the universal acceptance of this celebrated *ballade*. Records of it are to be had in five or six languages, and there is not one of them that does not appeal to the ear by its martial ring, its lofty note of patriotism, and the touch of true pathos that underlies the talk between the two veterans as they wearily wend their way back to France. Not a word or a note seems wasted in the telling of the story; from start to finish the thread is never lost for a moment; it grows in excitement as the dying soldier utters his last wishes to his comrade, anent the mode of his burial with hand on the sword that is to defend his Emperor even in death. No finer climax than the *Marseillaise* to such a theme could possibly be imagined. Well do I remember how magnificently Pol Plangon used to declaim that imperishable refrain, and I have a notion that he once recorded Schumann's song, but if he did I fear the record is no longer in circulation.

To-day its most striking interpreter is Theodor Chaliapin, who as a matter of course sings it in Russian, and, like most others, with the assistance of an orchestra. (Schumann thought the piano good enough, and so I daresay would most singers if a misguided public were not in the habit of refusing vocal records without orchestral accompaniment.) Chaliapin has done two versions of *The Two Grenadiers*. The earlier one (H.M.V., D.B.102) was acceptable enough until the second (H.M.V., D.B.933) took its place, and the vast superiority of the latter makes choice easy. The tone-colour and style are characteristic in the extreme, while the orchestra under Eugene Goossens gives admirable support. The life and energy of this rendering and its sense of contrast are what one misses in the otherwise adequate and precise performance of George Baker (Parlophone E.1050), one of the several English versions procurable in London music-shops. I give Roy Henderson credit (Vocalion K.05250) for contenting himself with the piano; also for

the manly quality of his dark tone and the strong emphasis of his diction. He ought, however, to have accelerated more just before approaching the *Marseillaise*. Clarence Whitehill (H.M.V., D.B.438) is powerful but uninteresting and uninspiring—probably because he uses a wretched translation. The Italian version employed by Titta Ruffo (H.M.V., D.B.242) seems to contain too many syllables, consequently upsetting the conciseness of the rhythm and to some extent the sonority of the voice. Still, it is an exceedingly realistic bit of work and can hardly fail to please the immense crowd of Titta Ruffo's Italo-American admirers.

There are other creditable English examples. Harry Dearth (H.M.V., D.215) was quite at his best when he recorded this song—well in tune, a free, vigorous style, unmistakable diction; Thorpe Bates (Columbia D.1043) plenty of virile tone, artistically managed, effective contrasts, and excellent enunciation (these both with orchestra, the second a semitone up); and, finally, Harold Williams (Columbia 3547), a bright, animated bit of singing, especially in the higher part of the *tessitura*, good clear diction, and a satisfactory piano accompaniment.

In addition to the above there are some twenty-five current records of Schumann *Lieder* in the latest Polydor catalogue, but these have not reached me in time for notice in the present article. Those of Brahms, Strauss, Liszt, and perhaps Loewe will, I trust, provide the main material for my concluding article on this subject next month. In the meantime I may renew the expression of my hope that a genuine demand may spring up for British records of the great German *Lieder*, whether sung in the original or to an English text; and this can only be done if the leading gramophone houses will promptly take the job in hand, engage the right artists to sing for them, and carry out the whole thing as thoroughly as they are building up their operatic and symphonic répertoires. In the end, I am convinced, it will pay them equally well.

HERMAN KLEIN.

(To be concluded.)

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NOTE.—We are very anxious that this competition should be treated seriously by every one of our readers at home and overseas. The results will not be of real value unless the winning list represents the *considered* judgment of a great many people. There is plenty of time; no need to send in your list till it has been altered and re-written week after week.

Just the titles, without any reference to gramophone records. Thus (i) Londonderry Air, (ii) Drink to me only, (iii) Air on G string, (iv) First tune in *Andante Cantabile* of Tchaikovsky's Quartet, Op. 11, etc. When you have chosen your twenty favourite tunes arrange them in order of preference. Do not bracket any of them.

Be absolutely honest in your choice, or the competition will fail in its object. Do not speculate as to which tunes other people are likely to choose. It is your personal favourites which we want to know.

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We shall ask the winning firm in this competition to make a present of a record to everyone of its clients who sends an entry.

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The Editor's decision will be final.

The result of the Organ Competition will be found on p. 431.



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# CONCERNING CONFIDENCE

By GORDON BOTTOMLEY

THE successful inauguration of the National Gramophonic Society's third year of activity, and its first issue of electric recordings, seems a suitable opportunity for retrospect and consideration, and members of the Society will perhaps not object to a fellow private member, and one in no way connected with its management or government, attempting this and speaking of the value of the Society and what he personally desires from it.

His first gramophone was bought in 1910 ; perhaps only those who tried at that time to form a record library of fine music know properly how to be grateful for the existence of the Society. In those days a very lean purse could buy all the music that was worth buying, and no exhortation to Buy Only British Goods could keep a music-lover anxious to take the gramophone in earnest from ransacking Europe from France to Russia.

Now Britain is the greatest producer of fine recorded music, and the change has been so far-reaching and swift that many people lose sight of the steps in the progress, and are inclined to blame the pioneers for their very success.

Good music was recorded and cut versions of string quartets were issued before the foundation of THE GRAMOPHONE, or Mr. Compton Mackenzie could not have received that beneficent gift of the Schumann quintet which has had such notable results. Yet no one can doubt that THE GRAMOPHONE has made a remarkable change in the recording companies' willingness to try good music on the public, or that the National Gramophonic Society has been the chief factor in persuading them of the possibility of issuing great compositions uncut.

Yet only five hundred readers of THE GRAMOPHONE have been willing to trust its Editor and his advisers to do still better for them. Three years ago a music-lover who demanded to hear on his gramophone the Debussy quartet, the exquisitely lovely and deeply-moving Schönberg sextet, the less frequently played of the two Schubert trios, the first Brahms sextet, the Brahms clarinet quintet complete, and Schubert's amazing last quintet would have been looked on as a possibly harmless but certainly unpractical and unhelpful Utopian. Yet now every one of these unlikely works, and as many more, have been recorded in the past two years through the organisation of the National Gramophonic Society. And one member's idea of gratitude is to state that he only cares to keep half of them—forgetful that one of the great benefits of such a Society to those who cannot attend concerts is to help them to discover which music they care

enough about to want to have always by them ; while another critic, who is not a member, complains that the activities of the Society keep its chosen music from being recorded for the general public—forgetful that up to the present time it is not likely there would have been any possibility or question of such music being recorded for the public at all had it not been for the activities of the Society.

There is, however, something to be said for the point of view of this critic. The Society has been too successful ; the terrain it chose on its inception has been so encroached on by the trade since its success became apparent that if it were to cease to-day its present good work would go on ; if the Society had never touched the *First Rasoumovsky Quartet* or the Schubert one in A minor, we might nevertheless have hoped for them within the next year or two.

It is less than grateful to insist on this ; at the same time it is a call to the Society for further enterprise—and to the members for more confidence in the directors of its policy, not less.

Our critic's solution of turning it into a canvassing agent for the recording companies would not, perhaps, really fulfil or further its founders' ideals ; this might even "do for it" promptly by arousing the hostility of the retailers, of whom the companies must obviously think first. A more interesting and attractive policy would be to look farther afield for music still more likely to remain otherwise unrecorded. No doubt the committee is more than willing to do this, but they need—at least in one member's estimation—encouragement from the members who play for safety and vote for Beethoven and Mozart every time.

No one wishes to deny that all Beethoven should be recorded ; but, from the Society's point of view, it is necessary to recognise that he will be.

The Mozart trouble is more complicated. There is a great deal of early Mozart on the market ; there is likely to be more, and it is a pity that the Society should add to it. It is not intended to deny that Mozart was probably the most marvellous and gifted youth in all human history ; that is undeniable (with a reservation on behalf of Keats and Giorgione which does not touch the musical question). Nor are the works of his earlier life without charm. They are all charm ; but they are proofs of promise, not of greatness, and their exquisitenesses are too much one kind of thing to make unlimited recording of them desirable so long as his greater works remain unrecorded. And that is the point : while his early quartets are being over-



recorded and re-recorded, there is only one cut version of one of his later and greater quartets, and the last set, the greatest of all, have never been recorded at all. If the Society is to pay constant homage to Mozart, it has made its true beginning with the *Clarinet Quintet*, not the *Oboe Quartet*. And if Beethoven must be represented such seldom heard works as the noble 'cello sonatas would best fulfil the Society's intentions and steer clearest of the recording companies' requirements.

Another correspondent in the January GRAMOPHONE, in a letter full of interesting suggestions, thinks it would be difficult to name more than a dozen works not likely to be recorded soon; but the field is wider than that. If the Society were given the only effective vote of confidence—a doubled membership—the range of music outside the companies' attentions could be explored to some purpose; and there, it is submitted, its justification lies. This correspondent's suggestions of Weber's *Concertstück*, Liszt's *Orphée*, Smetana's *Ultava*, and the orchestral numbers of Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* are very much to the point; the first two, especially, belong to a range of small but important orchestral works which are often neglected for grandiose things, and to them might be added such works as Sibelius' *Swan of Tuonela*, Mendelssohn's *Schöne Melusine Overture*, the entr'actes of Cherubini's *Medea* (a great work which has fallen almost completely into obscurity), and to Weber's *Euryanthe*, symphonic poems by Dvořák and Franck, Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe Suite*, Sir H. Wood's exquisite orchestration of Wagner's *Albumblatt Ankunft bei den Schwarzen Schwänen*, Berlioz's *Prelude to L'Enfance du Christ* and his *Overture to Béatrice et Benedict*, Goetze's symphony, Mr. Arnold Bax's *Garden of Fand*, Mr. J. B. McEwen's *Grey Galloway*, Debussy's *La Mer* and the two still unrecorded *Nocturnes Nuages and Sirénes*—the latter with the women's wordless voices, which are so integral a part of its charm.

The small choir necessary for the last item suggests another whole range of musical art suited to the Society's activities—the smaller choral works of all ages, beginning with Debussy again writing for women's voices in *The Blessed Damozel* (which would make as exquisite a small set of records as anything the Society has yet done); Berlioz's *Ophélie* for women's voices; excerpts from Schütz's *Passion Music* or *Biblical Scenes*, and such cantatas of Bach's as *Wachet Auf*.

And from these it is only a step to the solo cantatas of Bach; a small set of these recorded by the rare and exceptional art of Miss Dorothy Silk would be a highly desirable possession. And in another kind there is Mr. Rutland Boughton's fine early work that received one of the first Carnegie awards—*Sir Galahad: A Christmas Mystery*,—for solo voice and string quartet.

In the realm of chamber music, too, there are still

things to be done that are not likely to appeal soon to the recording companies—Smetana wrote more than one quartet, I believe; Dvořák certainly wrote others beside the *Nigger*, and a very fine terzet for two violins and viola too; Franck wrote trios, Arensky and Vítěslav Novák and Chausson have written desirable quintets; there is the violin and piano sonata of Guillaume Lekeu—not to speak of that by Mr. B. J. Dale. And there are works for larger combinations, such as the octets by Schubert and Mendelssohn, that ought to be recorded and are not otherwise likely to be.

If the whole range of music were to be reviewed, the possibilities would be still larger. Why are Chopin's two concertos still unrecorded? There are few things that could be more desirable and tempting, both for pianists and the trade. Brahms' last two symphonies still wait; his two piano concertos, his two 'cello sonatas, his violin concerto, his violin and 'cello concerto. There is the lovely *Dream of Paradise Garden* from Delius' one opera; there is Delius' violin concerto as well. There is Grieg's *Holberg Suite*; his very fine 'cello sonata; there is much of his *Peer Gynt* music that is worth while, beside the excerpts that form the popular suites—the scene of the Saeter Girls, for instance, which is composed throughout for three voices and is as entrancing as many a famous scene from opera, almost a miniature Walkürenritt with the romance of snow mountains in it instead of fire mountains. But these are clearly more matters for general enterprise than for a private society.

Beside the prospect of music otherwise unattainable there is another consideration that might well sway many hesitating sympathisers in favour of membership. When the first batch of records was delivered in the autumn of 1924 it was soon clear that the consciousness of playing for a special occasion to a picked audience had caused an always excellent quartet to excel itself. The Society may claim praise on another account also, which, though a minor one, has its own importance in these days of complete issues: with its first publication it did away with the convention that a new movement must begin on a new side, and automatically ensured that its subscribers should pay for as little blank shellac as possible. Where other recordings of works in the Society's list are on the market it will be found that each takes one more disc than the Society's version does—a fact that tells in the constant storage problem.

From one private member's point of view it seems reasonable to claim that the committee should be given a freer hand and urged to be adventurous: they have served the Society better than well, and have earned entire confidence.

GORDON BOTTOMLEY.



# THE GRAMOPHONE IN SCHOOL

A NEW FEATURE *conducted by* W. R. ANDERSON

AS I promised last month, I have now the pleasure of placing before my readers one of the articles written specially for this series by teachers who are using the gramophone in their regular musical work in schools.

Our first contributor, Mr. A. H. RADCLIFFE, L.R.A.M., is already known to many teachers by his articles in *The Music Teacher*, *The School Music Review*, etc. I commend Mr. Radcliffe's article to the consideration of all whose work lies in similar ways, and should any questions arise from his statement of methods and experience, I shall be glad to pass them on to him if readers will kindly address them to me.

Mr. Radcliffe writes as follows :—

Five years ago I was asked to take charge of the music throughout the boys' department of a large elementary school in an eastern suburb of London, being given an absolutely free hand in the framing of my syllabus. This wonderful opportunity found me with many ideas on the subject of the schoolboy's musical development, but with little experience of his reactions to music outside that obtained in the singing class, where, of course, his own efforts were the prime factor. In the initial stages, therefore, objectives in seeking to widen his musical horizon through the medium of listening to music were inclined to be somewhat hazy and hypothetical, lacking that definition which comes from getting to grips with one's task, and being coloured, firstly by the extravagant claims made on music's behalf by certain unwise educators, and secondly by the equally extravagant notions still held by many persons who fail to think critically as to the child's natural response to music in its highest forms. Gradually, however, one definite aim took shape, and it was discovered that what had hitherto been regarded as the means must be the end; that to establish contact between the child and fine music was all that one should, or, for that matter, could attempt; to go further, of set purpose, was to impose one's own personality on others, to devitalise the music's appeal and to promote a mild form, at least, of musical indigestion. This is stated by way of introduction to make clear at once what purpose the gramophone has been called to serve in the musical work at my school.

Until a year ago the school had no gramophone of its own, and I had to borrow from the boys. This

was usually something of an adventure. A handle would have to be fixed with string after the motor had been wound up, to prevent immediate unwinding; my own sound-box had to be substituted—very tactfully for fear of hurting the owner's susceptibilities—for the one on the borrowed instrument. One gramophone did quite well for nearly a year after the tone-arm and horn connections had been overhauled and well soldered at the metal-work centre. On more than one occasion a lesson was spoilt through lack of power in these makeshift instruments, a record, quite satisfactory in my own drawing-room, being hopelessly weak in a "sixty" classroom.

Now we have a modified H.M.V. "School Model" with corrected needle-track alignment, a "Luxus" sound-box, and the old worn-out motor replaced by a Paillard "G.G.R.," having a fine reserve of power, this being a great boon; winding is always a disturbing factor, and now it is practically eliminated once the boys appointed to the task have prepared the gramophone at the commencement of the lesson.

Generally speaking, I have used my own records. Boys have frequently offered assistance, but as a rule it has had to be declined, and again one's tact has been tested. Except in a few welcome instances, proffered records have been either totally unsuitable, or, on being tested privately, have proved to be hopelessly worn or damaged. This fact is worth notice; it gives some idea of the influences already operative in the children's minds; one is not dealing with virgin soil.

One hour per week is allowed for music, with an additional choir lesson of about twenty-five minutes for the upper classes. The gramophone becomes really an important factor in Standard V when the boys are, for the first time, permitted to join the parties organised at the school for attendance at orchestral concerts. In preparation, the orchestra is dealt with in some detail, with diagrammatic and gramphonic illustrations, and, where records are available, works to be performed at the concerts are played through after introductory explanation.

In Standard VI and above, more time is devoted to listening to music, without neglecting other aspects of the work, and the gramophone becomes increasingly valuable. A historical scheme is mapped out, but is not rigidly adhered to either in separate lessons or over a period; system in teaching can easily degenerate into formalism,



which must at all costs be avoided if interest is to be maintained.

To establish contact between boys and fine music. That has been stated as our objective, and we desire, not the passive contact which exists between the parts of a wireless set before tuning in, but the "fluid" contact which follows that act. In the first year I thought we had it. Most classes would listen to almost anything. But novelty was a deceiving factor here. Gradually it became apparent that certain pieces of music failed to grip, and that the necessarily lax discipline of the listening lesson—you can't drill people into a love of music—gave ample scope for indulgence in the besetting sin of mental inertia. A record would capture interest at the outset, but would fail to maintain it at much above the level of politeness. The Catterall Quartet's record of Haydn's Op. 76, No. 1 (the *Allegro*) is a case in point. The opening subject, appealing to the boys as rather droll, was immediately attractive, but its reappearances and modifications together with the rest of the music failed to arouse much enthusiasm.

How to *sustain* interest—that was the question. Music with well-marked rhythmic features was still successful, but a musical diet should surely not consist exclusively of works of the *Marche Militaire* type. Ready acceptance of one or two pieces of programme music indicated a solution of the problem. In *Fairies and Giants* from the H.M.V. records of Elgar's *Wand of Youth*, attention did not waver because, while the boys were listening to the fairies, they were waiting for the giants, and throughout they were wondering who would remain in the ascendant. Reappearances of themes now had significance, and programme music, of the dramatic type rather than the pictorial, began to loom large in the scheme of things. Excerpts from Wagner—*The Entry of the Gods*, *The Ride of the Valkyries*, etc., portions of *Till Eulenspiegel*, *L'Apprenti Sorcier*, and similar works, were well received, the music being enjoyed because the illustration of an unfolding sequence of ideas kept curiosity alive, and because its logic, being related to the logic of a story or incident, was easily followed.

Could the logic of absolute music, however, be made equally apparent? Through the medium of rhythm in its larger aspects—onward urge to phrase climaxes, through the phrases so defined to bigger climaxes, revealing, not merely illustrating, an unfolding sequence of ideas, and giving a significance to form—we proved that, in large measure, it could. I was not surprised therefore when, some months back, the Lener Quartet's record of the first movement of Mozart's *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* was encored.

It must not be assumed that rhythm alone receives close attention, but it would be true to say that practically everything of an intellectual character is considered, more or less, from a rhythmic standpoint. It is, of course, quite necessary to remove, as far as possible, the intellectual difficulties that bar the way to the child's appreciation of music, but this must never be regarded as an end in itself, otherwise one's pupils will be in a similar position to the child who "was given at school a bald narrative of Cinderella or Red Riding Hood where every word above a monosyllable would be divided in such a way that hyphens would always seem of greater importance than elves." This danger can be practically eliminated by making rhythm, as the main factor in revealing music's import, an all-embracing consideration, theme modifications, harmony, orchestration, and so forth being regarded as contributory. Form, in this way, becomes not so much an arbitrary design as a shapeliness fashioned by the music's logical growth. It was thus that sonata form was first studied in a movement from Beethoven, and afterwards applied to such work.

First movement: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (Mozart).

First movement: *Jupiter Symphony* (Mozart).

First movement: *Symphony No. 5* (Beethoven).

Overture: *Leonora, No. 3* (Beethoven).

Another fact worthy of note is that certain records appeal solely by reason of the *beauty* of their music, melody appearing to be the particularly attractive feature. Having no desire to dissect beautiful melody merely for the sake of teaching something, I say little or nothing in such instances, intellectual considerations are omitted and the music is left to speak unaided (or unhampered!).

Marjorie Hayward's record of *An Island Sheiling Song* is a case in point, one class preferring it to any of the pieces of programme music that had amused or interested them. Another example is provided by the record made by the Royal Choral Society under Dr. Malcolm Sargent, of *Behold the Lamb of God*. All the *Messiah* records are very popular, but this is an undoubted favourite.

Contact, I now feel, is being definitely established, and, to a number of boys, music is becoming a comprehensible language; but my work remains an adventure; when it ceases to be, it will cease altogether.

Originally proposed by one of the boys, Request programmes now form a regular feature of our work. Towards the end of the term each boy is told to write on a slip of paper the names of his three favourite musical works, not, of necessity, confining himself to music heard at school. These slips are



collected by two of the enthusiasts, who make a list of the submitted items in order of preference, and from it, programmes are arranged for the remaining lessons of the term. As a test, firstly of the success of one's work, and secondly of the growth of the boy's musical taste, the value of this scheme is obvious, but one must not be too hasty in arriving at conclusions. Recency of hearing is a very strong factor in placing a work at the top of a list—Delius' music to *Hassan* affords an example—but there are certain records which, while fluctuating in position, are rarely absent. The titles of many of these will be found listed at the end of the article.

Much space could be devoted to this fascinating phase of our work, but it must suffice to say that most of the conclusions stated in the foregoing section of this article have been either arrived at or substantiated by our Request programmes.

Frequently, since the gramophone was first used as an aid in musical education, it has been questioned whether pianistic ability is essential to the teacher who undertakes to give lessons in listening. I can imagine quite valuable work being done with nothing but a gramophone and a library of good records by way of equipment, but it would suffer from several drawbacks. Themes to be noted can, of course, be played over on the gramophone—indeed this is often the best procedure—but picking out the second subject in a sonata movement, or a particular treatment of any theme occurring in the course of a work, is not always a simple matter, and a few bad shots will not help the flow of a lesson any more than they will improve a record. Under the most favourable circumstances the teacher's personality—which is nearly the whole of teaching ability—is partially cramped; for illustration demands a wider and more elastic range of expression than is provided by the set music of a record.

It is this *personal* factor which is so important. My pianoforte technique and the school piano are hardly up to Wigmore Hall requirements, but my boys would rather hear me play any Beethoven movement of which I am capable than listen to a record of it. Call it bad taste if you like—I merely state a fact, and we must build on things as they are, not as we would have them, leaving that rather to be the result of our building.

In my rough notes for this article I put as the heading for this section "*Gramophone versus Piano.*" I altered it to "*Gramophone and Piano*" because I preferred, on second thoughts, to express just what the two instruments should be in any musical scheme—each the complement of the other.

In closing with a list of records of proved acceptance, but by no means exhaustive, I should like it to be noted that they are classified in accordance with the views set forth when "contact" was being

discussed. It does not follow from this that List A must be exhausted before Lists B and C are approached, nor must the works in each list be regarded as appearing, of necessity, in order of popularity.

#### LIST A.—PROGRAMME MUSIC.

(Works illustrative of action rather than of scenes.)

*Till Eulenspiegel*, Strauss, Columbia. *L'Apprenti Sorcier*, Dukas, H.M.V. *Overture to "Tannhäuser,"* Wagner, Velvet Face. *Entry of the Gods, Wagner, H.M.V. Ride of the Valkyries*, Wagner, Columbia. *Overture, "Rienzi,"* Wagner, Columbia. *Overture, "Der Freischütz,"* Weber, H.M.V. *Overture, "Oberon,"* Weber, H.M.V. *Overture "Cockaigne,"* Elgar, \*H.M.V. "1812" *Overture*, Tchaikovsky, Columbia. *Incidental Music, "Hassan"* (portions), Delius, H.M.V. *Tone Poem, "Finlandia,"* Sibelius, Velvet Face.

#### LIST B.

(Works in which action is still felt, but through the interplay of musical ideas.)

*Polonia*, Elgar, H.M.V. *Overture, "Leonora No. III.,"* Beethoven, \*H.M.V. (Both of these might well be included in List A.) *Unfinished Symphony* (First Movement), Schubert, Various. *Symphony No. 5* (First Movement), Beethoven, H.M.V. *Jupiter Symphony* (First Movement), Mozart, H.M.V. *New World Symphony* (First Movement), Dvorák, H.M.V. *Violin Sonata* (First Movement), Elgar, H.M.V. *Kreutzer Violin Sonata* (First and Last Movements), Beethoven, H.M.V. *Pathetic Symphony* (Third Movement), Tchaikovsky, Columbia. *String Quartet, Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (First Movement), Mozart, \*Columbia.

#### LIST C.

(Attractive features of melody, rhythm or form give the following their popularity.)

*March Militaire*, Schubert, \*H.M.V. *Marche Hongroise*, Berlioz, \*H.M.V. *March from "Tannhäuser,"* Wagner, Columbia. *Overture and Ballet Music, "Rosamunde,"* Schubert, Various. *A Children's Overture*, Quilter, H.M.V. *Gavotte in F* (violin: played by Kreisler), \*H.M.V. *Concerto for Two Violins* (Second Movement), Bach, H.M.V. *An Island Sheiling Song* (Violin), Hebridean Folk Song, H.M.V. *String Quartet in D (Minuet)*, Mozart, H.M.V. *String Quartet in G (Op. 18, No. 2) (Scherzo)*, Beethoven, Columbia

#### LIST D.

(Vocal and choral records.)

*Song of the Volga Boatmen* (Chaliapine), H.M.V. *Largo*, Handel (Caruso), H.M.V. *Erl King*, Schubert (Robt. Radford), H.M.V. *The Two Grenadiers*, Schumann (Chaliapine), H.M.V. *The Little Admiral*, Stanford (Peter Dawson), H.M.V. *Hope the Hornblower*, Ireland (Peter Dawson), H.M.V. *Sea Shanties*, records by Aco and Parlophone. *Behold the Lamb of God, Hallelujah Chorus, Worthy is The Lamb, Lift Up Your Heads*, from "Messiah," Handel, \*H.M.V.

\* Electrical recording.

A. H. RADCLIFFE.

NOTE—By arrangement, and for the better dissemination of this series of articles amongst school authorities, Mr. Anderson's monthly articles are appearing also in the first issue of each month of *Education*, the official organ of the Association of Education Committees.



# PHONOFILMS

By HERBERT R. PARSONS

**A**N entirely new method of recording and reproducing sound has, after many years of tedious experimenting, become a commercial proposition. I refer to the Phonofilm, invented and perfected by Mr. Lee de Forest, an American Ph.D., who has adapted it to synchronise with motion pictures.

The sound record and the picture record, however, although printed side by side on the same strip of film, are really quite independent. It is perfectly feasible to utilise the sound record separately, thus producing something analogous to the ordinary gramophone record, but with the added advantage of almost unlimited length—a point which will gratify music lovers, who rightly object to hearing a symphony a fragment at a time.

For a long time scientific experimenters have interested themselves in the reactive properties of certain chemical elements to light. It was found, for instance, that a selenium cell, when acted upon by a beam of light, creates an electrical impulse which can be detected by a suitable indicator. Similarly, should the light be intermittent, impulses exactly identical will be produced, while if the light varies, i.e., strong to weak, the selenium will set up an exact counterpart in the form of electrical impulses.

That was the start. From this it was deduced that if by some means, one could cause actual sound to impress itself upon a moving photographic film in the form of varying light densities, and a beam of light allowed to project these variations upon a selenium cell, the electrical impulses produced by the latter should, after suitable amplification, and via a "loudspeaker" diaphragm, re-create the original sounds without flaw.

This theory was discovered to be workable enough in practice, although the ultimate reproduction was somewhat imperfect. Added to this, simple selenium had the drawback of unreliability. To use a common expression, it "got tired," and after a few minutes' working caused muffled and distorted reproduction, sometimes even relapsing into inaudibility.

Thereupon a search was made for a more consistent chemical combination for the photo-electric cell, and it was Lee de Forest who evolved a new cell, an important constituent of which, I am told, is potassium. The success of the de Forest cell is one of the most important reasons for making the Phonofilm a commercial proposition.

Since the de Forest system has, so far, been adapted only to giving voice to the "silent drama,"

a brief description of how the Phonofilm speaking pictures are made is given below.

An ordinary cinematograph camera is fitted with a small vacuum-discharge (or "Photion") lamp, which projects a thin steady beam of light upon a narrow section of the film. This type of electric lamp is used because of its sensitivity to electrical oscillations (vibrations). This lamp is connected through a special circuit to a microphone placed within range of the actors or singers, but, of course, out of range of the camera lens. There is also a control board in circuit, about which more will be said later.

At a given signal the "action" starts, and the automatically-driven cinematograph camera commences photographing. Every word spoken, every note played, is picked up by the microphone and transmitted through the aforementioned circuit to the tiny lamp in the camera, which light "flickers" almost imperceptibly to the varying electrical impulses. The while, of course, the camera lens is dealing with the action and transferring it on to the film beside the sound record.

When the film is developed and a print taken, the photographic emulsion is seen to bear, not only the familiar strip of consecutive images of the moving artists, but, side by side with it, a narrow strip of sound record in the form of bars of light and shadow of all gradations of intensity.

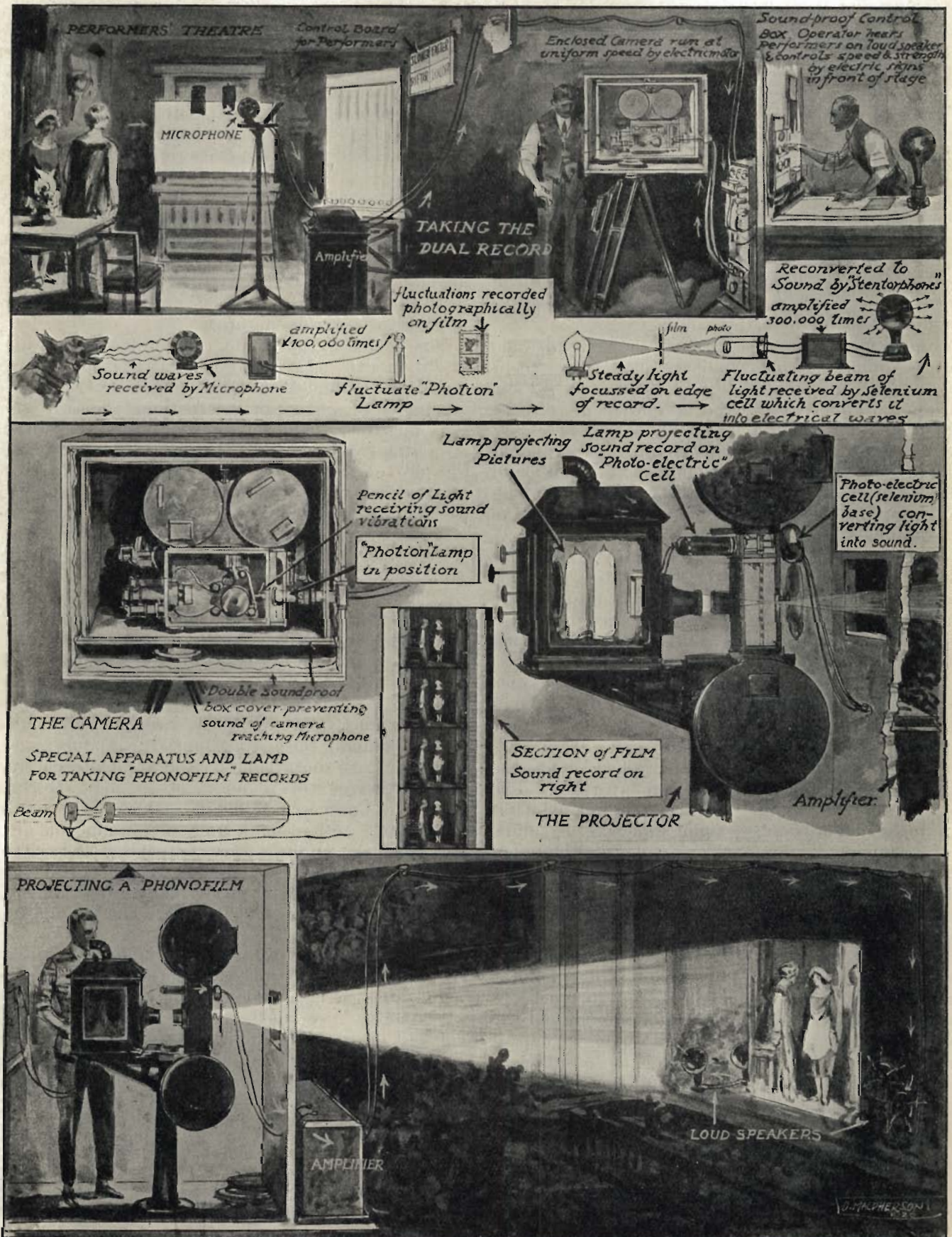
Now we come to the reproducing side. Once again, no great change in the ordinary cinematograph apparatus is made—simply a photo-electric cell attachment beside the projecting mechanism. Here a small beam of light plays on the sound record on the film, projecting the varying bars of light and shadow upon the cell, which as stated above, responds by imparting a vibrating electric current to a loudspeaker or series of loudspeakers arranged around the picture screen. Before the vibrations reach the loudspeakers they are, of course, passed through amplifying apparatus consisting of ordinary wireless valves.

From the above it will be readily seen that the method of reproduction is literally a reversal of the process of recording.

It must not be thought that the production of Phonofilms is a cut-and-dried foolproof business. From beginning to end every detail has to be carefully watched and controlled, and, in the studio, many hundreds of feet of film are often ruthlessly scrapped until perfection is reached.

For example, the microphone itself has to be under keen supervision, and, as in broadcasting,







is coaxed and controlled by an operator in a sound-proof chamber. In this room are a loudspeaker and a controlling device. If, by reason of the speaker or singer raising his voice or, perhaps, approaching too near to the microphone, overloading is indicated—and thus resultant blasting—the operator will “cut him down” by a slight turn of a knob.

On the other hand, should the exigencies of the speech, song or music demand “pianissimo,” then the operator will “boost him up” a little to avoid inaudibility. The presence of the loudspeaker is to detect whether or not the artist is enunciating too quickly to be understood. The operator assists matters by means of an electrically lighted indicator over the camera.

Remember that, because of the microphone, not a sound must be made in the studio except that which is part of the performance—which, incidentally, prohibits the employment of the shouting and raving producer, said to be a necessary evil of the ordinary cinema studio. Even should the artist apparently not notice the command flashed from the indicator the producer must still preserve his silence, and must convey what he wants by holding up printed cards.

The necessity for silence is so vital that people with coughs and colds are politely refused entrance to the Phonofilm studio, and even the automatic camera is shrouded in a heavily damped wooden box, so that not even its gentle whirr shall reach the microphone.

Some sounds record better than others. Voice is easiest, brass instruments next, wood-wind next, while strings, including the piano, are hardest of all.

The sound record is photographed upon the film before it reaches the picture aperture. The reason for this is that motion pictures demand an intermittent movement of the film to allow a fraction of a second for the photographing of each progressive image, while on the other hand, the sound record must be continuous. In other words, the vacuum-discharge lamp is fixed between the top film spool and the lens, there being between the sound record and its accompanying action picture a difference of about nine inches. To get action and sound back to synchronisation is simply a matter of manipulating the negative—advancing the picture strip a corresponding distance before printing the positives.

It is admitted, of course, that the Phonofilm is in its infancy, and that no one can tell to what magnitude it will eventually develop, or exactly how it may ultimately be used for entertainment.

First issues embraced such subjects as popular music-hall stars—Billy Merson, Dick Henderson, Bill Mayerl, Gwen Farrar, Sydney Nesbitt, Phil

Baker, Fred Barnes, Alvin and Kelvin Keech, and so on.

In the case of Phil Baker, whose speciality is the piano-accordeon, a turn of a somewhat startling nature was evolved—no less than an exchange of repartee between the artist and a member of the audience. All this was naturally well-timed and rehearsed, but the result well repaid the intricate labours.

Another experiment was the production of a series of Charleston lessons and demonstrations by Santos Casani and his partner, Jose Lennard—also a distinct success. Excerpts from “Rigoletto,” introducing the famous “Caro Nome” aria, were produced, and the result seems to suggest further possibilities of this nature.

The time may not be long distant when greater attention can be given to opera and the classics, and, I understand, it is shortly hoped to “sign on” a number of singers of international renown.

So far, most of the company's films are produced at a small experimental studio at Clapham, and in spite of the fact that there is room only for one “set” or scene at a time, the pictorial results are, for the most part, equal to those of the big studios.

A point which impresses itself upon anyone who is a frequent visitor of the Phonofilm studio is the rapid strides which are being made on the technical side of film sound recording. Every visit finds some fresh obstacle overcome, more “impossibilities” accomplished. Even a week or two brings new advances. A short time ago both camera and microphone were fixed in practically unalterable positions, and all “shots” were from identical angles and positions. Nowadays the camera and microphone are under the domination of the producer, and we have “long shots” and “close-ups” alternately, thus answering the requirements of art. During a popular number, for instance, the producer will concentrate both camera and microphone on any particular detail he wishes to emphasise, and a dance chorus will be rendered by a series of properly joined-up “close-ups” of individual instruments, e.g., a few bars from the piano, the succeeding line from the saxophone, and so on.

It is here, of course, that the gramophone owner begins to wonder if this new method of recording sound can be adapted for home use, like the gramophone disc itself.

I will go further than simply saying it can—I will assert that in the de Forest Phonofilm system of recording probably lies the ultimate evolutionary stage of the gramophone, and the realisation of the music-lover's dream—the record of unlimited length.

HERBERT R. PARSONS.

*Note.*—Thanks are due to Illustrated Newspapers Ltd. for permission to use the illustration of phonofilms.



# Analytical Notes and First Reviews

## THE BEETHOVEN CENTENARY

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1188-9 (two 12in. records, 13s.).—**Frederic Lamond** (piano-forte): *Sonata in C minor, Op. 13, Pathétique* (Beethoven).

D.1206-9 (four 12in. records in album, 26s.).—**Virtuoso String Quartet**: *Quartet in B flat major, Op. 18, No. 6* (Beethoven), and *Moment Musicale* (Schubert).

D.1158-63 (six 12in. records in album, 39s.).—**Albert Coates** conducting the **Symphony Orchestra**: *Symphony No. 3, in E flat, Op. 55, "Eroica"* (Beethoven).

D.1202-5 (four 12in. records in album, 26s.).—**Virtuoso String Quartet**: *Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No. 3* (Beethoven), and *Rondo in C major, Op. 74, No. 1* (Haydn).

D.B.990-5 (six 12in. records in album, 51s.).—**Fritz Kreisler** and the **State Opera Orchestra** (Berlin): *Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 61* (Beethoven) and **Fritz Kreisler**: *Adagio from Partita in G minor* (Bach).

\*D.1150-3 (four 12in. records in album, 26s.).—**Sir Landon Ronald** conducting the **Albert Hall Orchestra**: *Symphony No. 5, in C minor, Op. 67* (Beethoven).

D.1198-1201 (four 12in. records in album, 26s.).—**Wilhelm Backhaus** and the **R.A.H. Orchestra**: *Pianoforte Concerto No. 5, in E flat, Op. 73, "Emperor"* (Beethoven).

### COLUMBIA.

\*L.1775-82 (eight 12in. records in album, 52s.).—**Felix Weingartner** conducting the **London Symphony Orchestra**: *Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, "Choral"* (Beethoven).

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1164-71 (eight 12in. records in album, 52s.).—**Albert Coates** conducting the **Symphony Orchestra**: *Symphony No. 9 in D minor, Op. 125, "Choral"* (Beethoven).

D.1183-7 (five 12in. records in album, 32s. 6d.).—**Virtuoso String Quartet**: *Quartet in E flat, Op. 127* (Beethoven), and *Minuet from Quartet in E* (Dittersdorf).

(Miniature scores: Eulenburg and Philharmonia.)  
(See "Music and the Gramophone," pp. 21-100.)

Whatever were the thoughts passing through the mind of the dying genius that stormy afternoon the twenty-sixth of March, a hundred years ago, as he lay girding his soul for departure, we can be quite sure that he never foresaw the celebration of his centenary by the issue of a liberal selection from his greatest works in the form of gramophone records! The appearance of stray symphonies at odd times during the last few months has been the prelude to an avalanche of masterpieces. The generous nature of H.M.V.'s contribution may be seen from the above list; but this is not to be all, and I see that Columbia have piled up an even more extensive centenary catalogue, though the records have arrived too late for me to do them justice this month. And Parlophone too are doing their share.

As the monthly numbers of THE GRAMOPHONE have not yet reached the dimensions of a volume of Grove's Dictionary I shall have to be brief, but I cannot let the occasion pass without congratulating H.M.V. on the quantity of their work, its high quality, and the wisdom with which the selection has been made. "We about to go bankrupt salute thee!" as the Roman gramophile would have put it.

It will be noticed that I have arranged the works on the list in the order of their opus numbers and, I think, of their composition (though I have not had time to verify all the dates). To the first of the so-called "periods" belong the *Sonata Pathétique* and the *B flat Quartet*. The sonata is the earlier work, though owing, probably, to Beethoven's greater familiarity with the piano as a medium, it is, on the whole, the more mature in style. Lamond gives an excellent account of it; his reading is individual, and one may differ from him here and there as regards treatment, but he gives one the impression that he has a good reason for everything he does. Beethoven's rather brutal methods when dealing with

the piano make him difficult to record, but I think the company are right to concentrate on brilliance in the first *Allegro*, even at the expense of some of the softer virtues. The recording of the second movement is first rate and I like the rather quiet *Finale*.

The *B flat Quartet*, apart from *La Malinconia* and the very original *Scherzo*, is more Haydnesque. It records excellently, and I should like to say here and now how very much I admire the reproduction in all the three recorded quartets. There is hardly a trace of a shriek or whistle from the violin—and Beethoven takes the instrument very high—hardly a low note lost on the 'cello, and the definition of the parts is beyond praise. In the *B flat* work I like the graceful, almost humorous, slow movement best. But all are good; the quartet have worked hard and every note is in its place, every marking observed. I rather wish, though, that they had not chosen for the odd side an arrangement of Schubert's (piano) *Moment Musicale in F minor*; it loses much of its delicacy on the strings and sounds, after the Beethoven, a little cheap.

We now come to a cluster of "middle period" works written round about the year 1805. The first of these is the *Eroica* (Op. 55), of which Coates secures a very fine performance on genuinely heroic lines. The first and last movements are, I think, the most successful, and these really thrilled me. The failure of the oboes to bring out the main tune of the *Finale* is unfortunate, but it is, after all, a small blemish, and these tricky instruments fully atone for it by their exemplary behaviour in the *Funeral March*. There is a slight tendency in the records (as in many concert performances) for the strings to overbalance the wood-wind (this is intended more as a hint to the company than as a criticism), and there is one bad join—at the end of the second side, where we want another chord badly. But this is certainly the best *Eroica* I have heard on the gramophone, and it is quite complete. The *Prometheus Overture* on the odd side is a less weighty composition, but here again Coates has done very well.

In the third *Rasoumovsky Quartet* (Op. 59) the Virtuoso Quartet are at their best, and I should like to warn readers not to let an out-of-tune B flat (by the leader) in the Introduction put them off; it is a solitary lapse. The appeal of the work is less obvious than that of the earlier quartets, but it is music that grows upon one; it makes considerable demands on all the players, and on the recorders too. If I am asked to pick out a movement I shall select the second with its restrained interpretation and the beautifully reproduced *pizzicato* on the 'cello. I can't locate the Haydn movement on the odd side, by the way; it is not the *Finale* of the work numbered Op. 74, No. 1, in the Eulenburg edition.

There are two concertos to be considered, and at the cost of departing from my strictly chronological arrangement I shall take them together. They exemplify the two aspects from which it is possible to regard a concerto. The work for the violin is given a "star" performance with Kreisler in the leading rôle; the *Emperor*, on the other hand, receives a strictly businesslike (though by no means unmusical) interpretation from Backhaus, who regards himself as the ally rather than the master of the orchestra. The first method has its dangers, though they are minimised in this case, Kreisler being as much artist as virtuoso. All the same I wish he had been a little more restrained as regards tempo in the first movement; no one wants him to rush it, but the pace on the fourth side, for instance, can hardly be described as *Allegro ma non troppo*. The company's policy of putting the solo part so strongly in the limelight is also not without its disadvantages, the important orchestral part being smothered once or twice (as when the soloist first plays the second subject); but this defect is counterbalanced by the ability of the violin to meet the full orchestra on equal terms when necessary. Kreisler's technique and especially his intonation are marvellous, and his deep insight makes the music live throughout, the slow movement and *Finale* in particular being beyond praise. The orchestral part, if rather subdued, is very clear. The Bach movement on the odd side is exquisitely done.

In the *Emperor* it is the excellence of the ensemble that strikes one most, the balance between piano and orchestra being most nicely adjusted. The beginning of the third side and that passage on the eighth where soloist and drum are left alone, both provide happy examples of what the new recording can do. This *Emperor* is shorter by two sides than the earlier H.M.V. version, but it

\* These records have already been reviewed in THE GRAMOPHONE.



is quite complete, and the slight quickening of the first movement is never objectionable. The excellent quality of the piano's high register is noteworthy.

Both Columbia and H.M.V. have put good work into the *Choral Symphony*. The vocal part is done in English on both sets of records, but I am unable to judge of the merits of the translation (the same is used, I think, in each case) as after the opening baritone solo I was unable to catch more than an occasional word. The fault lies with Beethoven, and he is also responsible for the fact that the chorus is often lost in the ocean of orchestral sound. The H.M.V. chorus, however, has managed to come out strong in the tremendous *Seid umschlungen Millionen*, which is most effective. H.M.V. are also very successful with the difficult beginning and end of the first movement, and their *Scherzo* (in which all the repeats are observed) is electrifying. Their tone, too, is more massive than Columbia's, though they hardly achieve the silkiness of the Columbia strings. But they have done one really stupid thing; they have cut seven bars between the first and second sides of the slow movement! The reason for this (it is the only cut in the whole series of records) I cannot imagine. To issue this colossal work on eight double-sided records and then to mutilate it by omitting seven bars is a course of action that I find incomprehensible. Columbia have omitted some repeats in the *Scherzo*, but otherwise they give us every note.

There remains the *E flat Quartet*, Op. 127. Here again the *Virtuoso Quartet* have worked hard, and they have had the great advantage of quite impeccable recording which makes the carefully differentiated part-writing stand out very clearly—a most important thing in the condensed, closely-packed works of the last "period." But I do not find their playing quite so satisfying as in the earlier quartets. The notes are there, but to make the music live in these very difficult compositions it is necessary to re-create the whole thing and this they have not quite managed to do. Their best movement is the second, that lovely set of variations that are to me the supreme thing in the quartet. Into this they have indeed put that "last ounce" which makes all the difference, and I found the result extremely moving, especially in those two mysterious meditations where the key-signature changes to four sharps (at the end of the fourth and in the middle of the fifth sides).

The following works have arrived just as we are going to press:—

#### PARLOPHONE.

E.10533-6 (four 12in. records, 18s.).—**Karol Szreter** and the **Symphony Orchestra: Pianoforte Concerto No. 4 in G, Op. 58** (Beethoven).

#### POLYDOR.

69855-9 (five 12in. records, 28s. 9d.).—**Wilhelm Furtwängler** and the **Philharmonic Orchestra, Berlin: Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67** (Beethoven). On one side of 69855 **Paul and Rudolph Hindemith** play **Duet in E flat major for viola and 'cello, with an obbligato by two spectacles** (Beethoven).

Parlophone have done very wisely in selecting the G major *Concerto* as their contribution to the Beethoven centenary; this lyrical work demands sweet rather than powerful tone and is peculiarly well suited to the quality of the Parlophone recording. They have been fortunate, too, in their soloist; Karol Szreter is a musician and, eschewing all virtuosity, he has given a most poetical rendering of a *Concerto* which many pianists spoil by over-emphasis. The result is that I have no criticism to make of the performance (for the orchestra supports the soloist most sympathetically), except that there is just a suggestion of hurry once or twice in the *Finale*. But the *cadenzas* rather worried me; both are long, and both are painstaking rather than inspired. Had they been curtailed the only serious blemish in the series of records might have been avoided—for the company have had to make two cuts. The first occurs at the beginning of the second side, when four most important bars are omitted; the second (eight bars in extent) comes about fifty-seven bars later. This is a great pity. The recording is, perhaps, a little weak in the bass but it has a sweet, mellow quality that is most refreshing to listen to. The poor gramophone might go further and fare much worse than this cheap version of a most lovable work.

The Polydor *Fifth Symphony* is slower than the H.M.V. version, and this deliberation has had three consequences: the repeat in the first movement is omitted, there is a cut of eight bars between the two sides of the *Scherzo*, and the work occupies nine sides instead of eight. The repeat I can dispense with, and the extra side is a matter for the financier rather than the music critic. The cut I regret, but I must admit that it has been very well contrived. The rendering as a whole I admire enormously. It is certainly

as good as any I know, and it is supported by some superb recording. Polydor do not secure such massive effects as Columbia or H.M.V., their tone in *fortissimo*, though brilliant, is apt to be harsh, and their bass sometimes lacks solidity, but the balance between strings and wood-wind is astonishingly good and every detail stands out in the proper perspective. For these reasons I consider their first movement and *Finale* the best that I know, though I think that the English companies have done better in the two middle movements. I shall not say which set of records (H.M.V. or Polydor) I am going to buy; my inclinations are mostly a matter of temperament and should not be allowed to affect the judgment of others. But I do say that this Polydor version has most powerful claims on our attention.

The piece played by the two Hindemiths on the odd side is presumably one of Beethoven's jokes, but I have not the key to its meaning. I heard no "spectacles" though I listened attentively, but I did hear some amusing and high-spirited music excellently interpreted.

P. L.



## ORCHESTRAL

Instruments used: H.M.V. new model, large table grand, No. 126, sound-box No. 4; Columbia large table grand, sound-box No. 7.

#### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1154, 1155, 1156, 1157 (12in., 26s.).—**Royal Albert Hall Orchestra**, conducted by **Elgar: Enigma Variations** (Elgar).

(See "*Music and the Gramophone*," pp. 133-136.)

D.B.997, 998, 999, 1000 (12in., 34s.).—**Kreisler** and the **State Opera Orchestra of Berlin**, conducted by Dr. Leo Blech: **Concerto in E minor, Op. 64** (Mendelssohn) and **A May Breeze** from "*Songs without Words*" (Mendelssohn, arr. Kreisler).

C.1309 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Jack Hylton** and his **Orchestra: The Three Bears** (Eric Coates).

The new *Enigma* is an achievement which, to my mind, ranks with that of the new Beethoven *Fifth*, which I was glad to praise last month. It was meet that one of the comparatively early fruits of the new recording should be these new discs of one of the greatest of all orchestral works. I was a little anxious lest it should be recorded too soon—before the strings had had time to lose some of their shrillness and sting. They have lost much of those not too pleasant qualities in this performance, and we have something to be proud of, and to cherish. All but two or three of the "friends pictured within" (to whom the work is dedicated) are now identified. That, however, is a small point, because we don't know what they were like; but the music contains some delightful hints as to their characters and moods. These pieces are not like the kind of "programme music" which must needs be followed with schedule in hand, to understand what is happening "at bar 37" or "in the second violin part at the entry of the counter-subject." They have a life and a concentration of energy of a remarkable and rare order.

The Variations stand the test of the years; they mellow and grow dearer. They are of the company of the great, and greatly, I feel, have they been recorded.

I am specially glad that the change-over between Variations 8 and 9, that we had in the old H.M.V. records, has been avoided. So we have the full effect of that magical change of key from the bright and happy G to the deeper and nobler feeling that E flat brings us in *Nimrod*. That change, with the violins holding on the G, is like the opening of a door into a richer and more beautiful apartment of the composer's mind than before we have been privileged to enter. Is there a finer miniature slow movement in all music?



What a splendid character must that have been which inspired such a tribute! I place this foremost among the many happy pieces of soul-easing music that I love to remember. It does good to the spirit just to put that record on and let its wholesome balm sink in.

It is often said that Elgar is not a great conductor. In the ordinary sense that is true, but I have heard him before get far more out of his own works than one would expect he could, judging from his manner. Of course, the players are on their mettle when he appears. What he does or says to them I don't know, but he seems to imbue them with the right spirit for the drawing forth of the full beauties of his most deeply felt music.

I suggest that you keep your speed on the slow side. The tendency is to take some of the Variations at a break-neck pace. In No. 7 (*Troyte*) the drums are not as clear as I should like them to be. The speed is partly responsible, and the other difficulty is their peculiar acoustics—peculiar as far as the disc is concerned. I rather wish Elgar had chosen a rather slower speed for the more lusty Variations.

I suggest that if the support for this re-recording is adequate, as I heartily hope it will be, the Company make a solemn vow to give us the other symphony (one has been done, you remember), and that exquisite cello concerto, with the serenade for strings, and then "*Falstaff*"—and indeed the whole of Elgar. Surely we ought to be able to say, in this country, that all the orchestral works of our greatest musician—one of the greatest men living, and one who is worthy to rank with the choicest spirits of all time in our art—are available in recorded form. I feel sure all lovers of Elgar's works will join me in this request, and will devoutly hope it may soon be possible to obtain a complete edition of them.

There is a maturity and strength in Kreisler's violin playing that helps along Mendelssohn's concerto considerably. Some would prefer, perhaps, a more silky and suave tone, such as many players employ. They seem, most of them, to keep a special brand of tone for this work. I like Kreisler's taking it seriously, even philosophically—as most musicians must do, in one way or another. The tone comes out a trifle hard, it appears to me, but that, it seems clear, is the tinge given to it by the recording process. It is rather a pity that near the beginning (about half an inch in) his upward rush in octaves should not quite come off all the way; but that is a small blemish. The orchestra keeps well with the player, save for an instant in the first movement, and that is about all it is required to do. Its tone is sufficiently clear and cool.

On listening to these records again, I wonder if Kreisler is quite the man for the work? He is rather heavy metal for Mendelssohn, and my final thought is that he is taking the job just a trifle too seriously. That was what Mendelssohn did for himself, so often—and what other people aided and abetted him in. He was a great man, and those who lightly dismiss him are foolish; but though he altered his work so much, and was so conscientious, he just lacked—until too late—the stab in the heart, that draws upon a man's deeper nature.

Those who want a really sound and big-scale performance of the concerto could not do better than get these records.

*The Three Bears* is a piece of programme music that was one of the novelties of the last Promenade concert season. It has apparently been re-scored for Mr. Hylton's band. In this form, the only one in which I have heard it, it is most effective. Beginning with a phrase that says very plainly "Who's been sitting in my chair?" we go on to a picture of little Goldilocks. A bird chirps a word of warning, the clock strikes five. She trots off to the bears' house, and falls asleep on the little bear's bed. The fugal bit (two-thirds of the way through the first side) describes the entry of the three bears, their astonished exclamations, and their search for Goldilocks and pursuit of her. They puff and pant, and give up the chase (start of second side). They jazz away home (this is a weaker musical idea—too conventional). We return to the heroine, apparently, on this side, and conclude with a reminder of the bears' question.

The piece is a little long, and the second half is not so good as the first. Of course, it is mild enough fun, but as I have said hard things of Mr. Hylton and his jazz, I am pleased to be able to say that in this appropriate music, with its touch of humour, he is comfortably at home. (I still maintain, of course, that jazz orchestration is infinitely feeble in every way than that which is possible in even a small "legitimate" band; but that is a defect which the jazz bands have set up for themselves; only they mustn't try to persuade us it's a virtue. My praise goes for the way in which they make the best of a bad job!)

## PARLOPHONE.

E.10528 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—Orchestra of the State Opera House, Berlin, conducted by Siegfried Wagner: *Ride of the Valkyries* (Wagner).

E.10529, 10530 (12in., 9s.).—Orchestra of the State Opera House, Berlin, conducted by Ed. Moerike: *Invitation to the Dance* (Weber) and *Dance of the Apprentices* from "*The Mastersingers*" (Wagner).

The *Ride* is good, clean work, powerful and well sustained. It is a trifle too deliberate for my taste. On the whole, it makes a good second to the recent H.M.V. record. Some of the gusts of tone are as big, I think, but one does not quite get the sense of almost terrifying energy and supernormal power that the recent recording gave. Still, this is a good piece of work, at a popular price. I should put it on at something over the usual 80 speed, and risk the higher key for once.

The Weber piece is rather long-drawn, on three sides, for its interest. We are not told whose orchestral version this is. It sounds like Berlioz. I like the fiddle technique here. In Parlophone records this is always good. There are one or two tiny slips in intonation, which is not common with this company; they are very slight, however, and would pass unnoticed by most hearers, less acute than the readers of THE GRAMOPHONE. I take it that most of them have heard of the piece's having a poetic basis. Weber thought of a ball-room scene; a gentleman invites a lady to dance, she coyly refuses, he urges, she consents, they dance and talk, she thanks him and bows, and they exchange glances of pleasure and—anything else you like.

The *Dance of the Apprentices* is in capital feather. I like this (the last side of the four) very much. At the end there is the slightest possible discrepancy in tuning (so it appears) between brass and strings. This may easily be due to the acoustics of the hall, to the relative nearness of the instruments, or to one of several other causes. It is not unknown in the new-process records, and rarely causes active annoyance.

## COLUMBIA.

L.1820, 1821 (12in., 13s.).—Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Bruno Walter: *Overture to "Rienzi"* (Wagner).

L.1822, 1823 (12in., 13s.).—Hallé Orchestra, conducted by Harty: *With the Wild Geese* (Harty).

L.1824, 1825, 1826 (12in., 19s. 6d.).—Archie Camden and orchestra conducted by Harty: *Concerto for Bassoon* (Mozart) and, on last side, *Allegro Spiritoso* (Senallé, arr. Camden).

9166 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—B.B.C. Wireless Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Percy Pitt: *Overture to "The Barber of Seville"* (Rossini).

The new *Rienzi* records give a first-rate account of the work. The music marks a period in Wagner's development that is extremely interesting, and, heard in the light of some little knowledge of his developing nature, becomes increasingly significant. This full-blooded performance is sure to be liked by everybody.

Harty's tone-poem is too little known. It is a distinctive and well-built piece, based on the legend that when the Irishmen who fought for France at Fontenoy in 1745 were killed, their souls, in the form of a flock of geese, flew home to Ireland. Two poems by the Hon. Emily Lawless are prefixed to the score. (They may be found in the volume entitled "*With the Wild Geese*"). The music gives us the scene in camp at night, before the battle, with the home-thoughts of the exiled "sons of Clare," their characteristic gay and careless tune coming in; a short night-scene leads to the battle, in which we have no long-drawn description of carnage, but a vision of the glorious charge of the Irishmen. A lament sounds for the fallen. It swells into triumph as they are imagined arising and taking flight. The last thought is of this wonderful homecoming, and we are left with the right feeling of affection for the great-hearted adventurers.

The recording is in all respects true and worthy. This is a most attractive issue.

The Mozart is great fun—nothing deep at all, but all as graceful and sunny as Mozart knew how to make it. The piece was one of the many he wrote for friends. With two other concertos, it was composed for an amateur bassoonist, the Baron von Dürnitz. The little joke in the last movement, when Mozart brings in bits



of "Figaro," is a happy touch. The bassooning by Mr. Camden rouses my admiration, remembering as one should the difficulties of keeping perfectly in tune on that instrument of too many alternatives. The Senaillé is a dapper, simple-minded, and quaint fragment. It reminds one of some of the eighteenth-century ballads of the sea that we used to have, quickened up and touched with a foreign tar-brush. (Actually, of course, our folk got their ideas largely from the foreigner at that time.)

The B.B.C. Orchestra tackles the "Barber" in bold style. The fiddles cut the ear a trifle on their higher reaches; otherwise there is much pleasure in the playing, which is well up to the Columbia cheap-record standard.

#### VOCALION.

K.05283 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—**Aeolian Orchestra**, conducted by Stanley Chapple: *Overture to "Oberon"* (Weber).

This is a well-considered performance, just lacking the last ounce of authority and pomp in the flaring parts, and a wee bit on the underdone side in the lightest parts, but containing a good body of warm, soundly built-up tone that is good to hear. The Marconi system of recording is producing very clear and bright results.

#### ZONOPHONE.

A.313 (12in., 4s.).—**National Symphony Orchestra**: Selection from "*Madame Butterfly*" (Puccini).

A nice, straightforward piece of playing. To play this music without over-sentimentalising it is something of a feat. The tone is bold and round. Without having subtlety, the playing yet pleases by its honesty and unaffectedness. K. K.



## INSTRUMENTAL

### CHAMBER MUSIC.

With the very important exception of the Beethoven quartets reviewed by me in another column, there is little chamber music this month. What there is may, perhaps, be included in this "Instrumental" section. The **Catterall Quartet** are highly successful in the *Allegro Risoluto* from *Armstrong Gibbs' Quartet in E* (Columbia, 9178, 12 in., 4s. 6d.), a piece of fresh, vigorous writing with any amount of rhythm that makes me want to hear the rest of the work. On the other side is Frank Bridge's attractive *Cherry Ripe*, a sort of contrapuntal *fantasia* into which the air fits without the incongruity that usually characterises adaptations of this kind. The recording is Columbia at its best, and the same may be said of 4215 (10 in., 3s.), into which the **London Flute Quartet** manages to squeeze five pieces—no mean achievement. They are *Dance of the Elves* (Grieg), *Prelude No. 7* (Chopin), *Norse* (Grieg), *Scherzo* (Jadassohn), and *Flight of the Bumble-Bee* (Rimsky-Korsakov). The Chopin does not come off, but I was simply delighted with the Bumble-Bee (the flutes turn the beast into a bluebottle, but that doesn't matter), and in its way I thought this record as great a triumph as that of the Catterall Quartet.

### STRINGS.

I hope that everyone who buys any of the new Beethoven issues that I have reviewed elsewhere will also purchase Columbia D.1559-60 (two ten-inch records, 9s.), a performance of Tartini's *Devil's Trill Sonata* by *Albert Sammons*. Tartini died at a good old age in 1770, which is the year of Beethoven's birth, and this record is a timely reminder that conceptions of the sonata very different from those of the Bonn master have been held in other times and other places and proved valid. This particular example is beautifully played and recorded; we may find Tartini's eighteenth-century Devil less horrid than some of his successors, but his music is still the devil to play, and Sammons deserves our congratulations. Another good violin record, though of a very

different kind, is *Rendé Chemet's* (H.M.V., D.A.814, 10in., 6s. 6d.); she gives us Spanish music, a *Jota* and *El Paño Maruna* (de Falla), both of them excellent tunes skilfully dished up. Her playing is good in both the rhythmic and the melodic passages and she is well served by the recording. Frederic d'Erlanger's *Poème*, on the other hand (played by *Adila Fachiri* on the two sides of Vocalion K.05287, 12in., 4s. 6d.), is disappointing; this thoroughly well-bred music suffers from anaemia, and even the best of playing and recording fail to give it any real vitality.

*Lionel Tertis* (Columbia D.1562, 10in., 3s.) is very pleasing in Schubert's *Nacht und Träume* and Fauré's *Après un Rêve*. Both these are originally songs, but the tunes are quite strong enough to stand by themselves, and the poor violinist has such a wretchedly limited repertoire that we cannot blame him when he poaches. I have an idea, however, that Benjamin Dale wrote for Tertis a *Suite* (?) for viola and piano; if this is so might we be allowed some of it?

A single 'cello record by *Casals* (H.M.V., D.A.833, 10in., 6s.) contains Rubinstein's *Melody in F* and the ubiquitous *Träumerei* (Schumann). Playing and recording are up to the best standards of this artist and this firm, so may we hope that they will be accepted as the standard version and that *Träumerei*, at any rate, will be given a rest for a bit?

### PIANO.

The first-rate recording, especially in the top register, is the most notable thing about *Clair de Lune* and *Toccata, C sharp minor*, which *Percy Grainger* performs for Columbia on L.1829 (12in., 6s. 6d.), though the capable and sympathetic renderings are also worthy of high praise. *Clair de Lune* we know, but I cannot recollect any other recent version of the *Toccata*, and I offer the pianist my thanks. *Muriel Warne* and *Dorothy Folkard* (Columbia 4075, 10in., 3s.) provide two piano duets, their material consisting of arrangements of Beethoven's *Turkish March (The Ruins of Athens)* and Schubert's *Impromptu, Op. 90, No. 2* (the one in E flat with triplets.) Their playing is musical and unassuming, and it comes out well on the record, but the *March* sounds as if it might have been done almost as well on a single instrument; the Schubert makes rather more use of the available resources, especially when we reach the section in the minor key. *Mark Hambourg* (H.M.V., C.1307, 12in., 4s. 6d.) takes certain liberties with Chopin's lovely *Nocturne in G*, especially in the matter of tempo; but to me, at any rate, this freedom is not offensive and in any case I could forgive him much for the beauty of his ending. His other contribution is our old friend the *Liebestraum, No. 3* (Liszt), which in his hands ceases to be a "traum" and becomes really hard work. This piece never records particularly well, but I can congratulate the H.M.V. experts on producing a version that is at least as good as any other that I have heard. *London Bridge* and *Gavotte* are two simple, child-like things by Balfour Gardiner, both contained on one side of Vocalion K.05259 (12in., 4s. 6d.); *York Bowen* plays them deliciously; I have never heard him to greater advantage. His own *Thumbalina* and *The Windmill* on the back of the disc are simple examples of programme music which he (or some other) introduces with a few spoken words. This proceeding, which here I find unobjectionable, suggests that the record may be designed for children, and I feel sure children would enjoy it.

### ORGAN.

The playing of *R. Goss-Custard* is always dignified and musicianly and his restrained treatment of Walford Davies's *Solemn Melody* and Hollins's *Intermezzo in D flat* (H.M.V., C.1305, 12in., 4s. 6d.) does him credit, although, unlike many of my colleagues, I do not find the *Solemn Melody* very interesting. On another H.M.V. disc (B.2399, 10in., 3s.) *Arthur Meale* entertains us with Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C sharp minor*; I don't much like the loud chords *staccato* near the end, but otherwise if you must play the *Prelude* I suppose the best thing is to "go the whole hog" (bells and all), as Meale does. On the other side he has Lemare's *Pastorale*, music of the "vox humana" variety. The recording in both these discs is as good as ever and neither is overwhelmingly loud. I welcome this moderation on the part of the company and its artists; in the early days of electric recording for the organ they had some excuse for wishing to show us what massive tone the new process could produce; but now, their object achieved, we may legitimately hope that they will temper those heroic methods with artistic discretion. P. L.

[A large number of instrumental records are unavoidably held over for review next month.—ED.]





## OPERATIC

**RACHEL MORTON** (soprano): *By the Ramparts of Seville*, Seguidilla, from "Carmen" (Bizet) and *He loves me* from "Faust" (Gounod). In English; orch. acc. H.M.V., E.447 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

**AIDA POGGETTI** (soprano).—*Musetta's Song* from "La Bohème" (Puccini), in Italian, and *Le Toreador* from "Don César de Bazan" (Adam), in French. V.F. 699 (12in., 4s.).

**LAURITZ MELCHIOR** (tenor): *Winterstürme wichen dem Wonnemond* (Siegmond's Love Song) from Act I. of "Die Walküre" (Wagner) and *Prize Song* from Act III. of "Die Meistersinger" (Wagner). In German; orch. acc. Brunswick 50085 (12in., 8s.).

**CECIL SHERWOOD** (tenor).—*Una furtiva lagrima* and *Quanto è bella* from "L'Elisir d'Amore" (Donizetti). In Italian; orch. acc. Columbia 4198 (10in., 3s.).

**CECIL SHERWOOD** (tenor): *Serenata* and *Sogno soave* from "Don Pasquale" (Donizetti). In Italian; orch. acc. Columbia 4219 (10in., 3s.).

**JOHN O'SULLIVAN** (tenor): *O Paradiso* from "L'Africana" (Meyerbeer) and *Celeste Aida* from "Aida" (Verdi). In Italian; orch. acc. Columbia L.1828 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**JOHN O'SULLIVAN** (tenor): *Arioso* from "Pagliacci" (Leoncavallo) and *E lucevan le stelle* from "La Tosca" (Puccini). In Italian; orch. acc. Columbia D.1564 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

**DAME NELLIE MELBA** (soprano) and **JOHN BROWNLEE** (baritone): *Dite alla giovine* from "La Traviata" (Verdi), in Italian, and *Un ange est venu* (Bemberg), in French; piano acc., Harold Craxton. H.M.V., D.B.987 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

**MARY OGDEN** (mezzo-soprano) and **WILLIAM HESELTINE** (tenor) in *Home to our Mountains* and **GERTRUDE JOHNSON** (soprano) and **WILLIAM HESELTINE** with grand opera chorus in *Miserere* from "Il Trovatore" (Verdi). In English; orch. acc. Columbia 9168 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**CHARLES HACKETT** (tenor): *All hail, thou dwelling* from "Faust" (Gounod) and *Down her pale cheek* from "L'Elisir d'Amore" (Donizetti). In English; orch. acc. Columbia L.1832 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**G. ARANGI-LOMBARDI** (soprano) and **LA SCALA CHORUS**.—*Madre pietosa Vergine* and *La Vergine degli Angeli* from "La Forza del Destino" (Verdi). In Italian; orch. acc. Columbia L.1883 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**ARTHUR JORDAN** (tenor): *Ah! Yes, thou'rt mine* from "Il Trovatore" (Verdi) and *Turiddu's Farewell* from "Cavalleria Rusticana" (Mascagni). In English; orch. acc. Columbia 9180 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**ANNE ROSELLE** (soprano): *Dio Madre* from "Madame Butterfly" (Puccini) and *Ritorna Vincitor* from "Aida" (Verdi). In Italian. Orch. acc. Polydor 73026 (12in., 6s. 9d.).

**BOHNEN** (Sachs) and **SCHUTZENDORF** (Beckmesser): *Oh, ihr boshafte Geselle* and (Schützendorf only) *Den Tag sch' ich erscheinen* from Act II. of "Die Meistersinger" (Wagner). In German; orch. acc. Parlophone E.10542 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**BOHNEN** (Sachs), **BETTENDORF** (Eva), **OEHMANN** (Walther), and **SCHUTZENDORF** (Beckmesser): *Geliebter spare den Zorn und Jerum, jerum*, from "Die Meistersinger" (Wagner). In German; orch. acc. Parlophone E.10541 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**EMMY BETTENDORF** (soprano) and **LAURITZ MELCHIOR** (tenor): *Duet, Hörtest du nichts? vernamst du kein Kommen* from "Lohengrin" (Wagner) and (Bettendorf, with chorus) *Ich scheide nun aus Eurer Hitte* from "Undine" (Lortzing). In German; orch. acc. Parlophone E.10540 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**TINO PATTIERA** (tenor): *Recondita armonia* and *E lucevan le stelle* from "La Tosca" (Puccini). In Italian; orch. acc. Parlophone E.10538 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

*Rachel Morton*.—This promising vocalist continues to do good work, but she has not yet mastered all the secrets of the art of recording. If she succeeds better in one piece than another, she should listen carefully for the point of difference and strive to take a lesson from them, making use only of the best qualities of tone that her voice can be made to yield. For example, this excerpt from "Faust" is better than that from "Carmen," because she succeeds more easily in producing a dark, sustained timbre, full of sympathy and passion, than when suggesting the sly, provocative utterances of the Sevillense damsel who warbles the *Seguidilla*. The latter, as a matter of fact, possess neither smoothness nor charm, though the words of the old English version come out clearly enough. By the way, I like hearing that lovely orchestral bit at the end of the Garden Scene in "Faust." It is generally either cut off by applause or by the descent of the curtain.

*Aida Poggetti*.—The evident inexperience of the singer accounts for a great deal that is wrong about this record. Possessing a naturally fine soprano voice, she has failed as yet to obtain control of it. Her breathing is very faulty and permits of a marked tremolo, which shows badly in a gramophone record; while her accent and enunciation are unsatisfactory both in Italian and French. Then she takes Musetta's lively, mischievous song literally at the pace of a funeral march—for all the world as though she had never heard it in "La Bohème" or anywhere else. The air with variations known as "Le Toreador" is given in such slovenly fashion that I advise the artist for her own sake to re-record it. I am convinced she could sing it much better.

*Lauritz Melchior*.—Another welcome instalment on account from the excellent tenor who is going to sing Siegmund (but not Walther) at Covent Garden this season. He certainly has a fine voice and uses it in the heroic manner. His tone is more "covered" and refined in the *Prize Song* than the "Walküre" piece, but he sustains and phrases well in both, while his German diction might truly serve as a model. The sole fault worth pointing out is the audible gasp for breath. It might escape notice in the theatre, but on the gramophone it is palpable and irritating.

*Cecil Sherwood*.—There is a veritable spate of tenor records this month—not a single baritone! Such an *embarras de richesses* is trying to one's powers of discernment; for tenors formed and trained upon the modern Italian model sound so much alike that it is really difficult at times to tell one from the other. What is more, their average merit is very high, which only makes the task of discrimination harder still. In these new records by Cecil Sherwood the voice comes out big, clear, and resonant; it only needs a little more variety of colour and occasionally, too, of steadiness, which in the case of this singer only means avoiding over-pressure. On the whole he sings Donizetti exceptionally well and each of his efforts has genuine merit to recommend it.

*John O'Sullivan*.—The Columbia Company would appear to be preoccupied with the immediate necessity for re-roasting the "chestnuts" or re-hashing the hackneyed. And a very good idea, too, when the right material is at hand, the demand self-evident, and the recording so amazingly improved. The old operas are, of course, the least expensive; but then they are the ones we like best, and a voice with the Caruso-like quality and robustness of John O'Sullivan's has all the resisting power essential for the big "battle-horses." Hence the *Recitar* aria from "Pagliacci," the *Lucevan* from "Tosca," the *Paradiso* from "L'Africana," and *Celeste Aida*—a sort of "clean sweep while you are about it." Well, truth to tell, they are all magnificently sung, well accompanied, and admirably recorded. Our Italo-Hibernian tenor is an artist to be reckoned with at Covent Garden next June. I would give him only one piece of advice—to beware of uniting into a single sentence phrases which ought to be divided by breaths that serve for exclamation or punctuation.

*Dame Nellie Melba and John Brownlee*.—Although the Bemberg duet is not one of his best efforts, it goes very well with the Verdi-like specimen from the second act of "La Traviata" as a suitable and effective theme for Dame Nellie and her talented countryman to exploit. Their voices mingle pleasantly, the quality of the famous prima donna's being still wonderfully pure. Harold Craxton's accompaniments are, as usual, quite perfect.

*Mary Ogden, Gertrude Johnson, and William Heseltine*.—More duets of the familiar but ever-popular sort, brought up to date by all the accessories that modern recording can furnish good singing withal! The *Miserere* is the better example of the two; the voices blend agreeably, although the soprano controls her medium more efficiently than her head register, and the tenor soloist is



often a trifle more modest than he need be. The chorus is adequate and well in tune. In *Home to our Mountains* some neat work is done by both singers.

**Charles Hackett.**—So far as the purely vocal side is concerned there is little fault to find with this tenor's performances. One might prefer a slightly less nasal production, and so strong an organ could well dispense with that extra "diapason." Still, there is no getting away from the fact that it is a fine tone. What is far more open to criticism is Mr. Hackett's distortion of English vowels and all the exaggerations—evidently unconscious in an American singer—to which it leads. Really some kind friend should point these errors out to him! No amount of beauty of tone and sentiment will compensate (to English ears) for sounds that are a mere mockery of our glorious language. I have animadverted upon these things *ad nauseam*, but this singer is so good that he ought to be told of his mistakes—such, for instance, as that of singing the cadenza in the *Furtiva lagrima* upon a word like "ever."

**G. Arangi-Lombardi.**—With the Scala chorus in the background this clever Italian soprano makes a sufficiently picturesque affair of these two selections from *La Forza del Destino*. The tremolo is rather prominent, of course; but then, *que voulez-vous?* If you desire the real Italian article of to-day, you must take it as it comes, especially if, apart from that little defect, you have here a couple of highly dramatic and musically perfect records.

**Arthur Jordan.**—Rather doleful, I fear, the impression left behind by these solos. The singer is always artistic; but in the present instance his style suggests oratorio rather than opera, and all of Turiddu at least dwells on the same wailing sentimental note. There is nothing really big or traditional either about this unmanly Manrico, though he is pleasing enough, I allow. Rather a pity, when the English words are so pure and distinct in both cases.

**Anne Roselle.**—The voice in this disc sounds small and obscured. I have tried it over two or three times with different needles, with the same result. Nevertheless, both records are interesting and, but for the singer's persistent *vibrato*, would worthily represent her art and her intelligence; both of which are becoming celebrated. Perhaps some day she will get rid of the only objectionable blemish in her work and then we shall welcome in her a great Verdi-Puccini artist.

**Bohnen and Schützendorf.**—They are beginning to send us from the Continent some delightful Wagner "tit-bits" that have not hitherto been deemed worth the trouble of recording, or perhaps were too awkward to present under the old conditions. The consequence is that gramophonists will soon be able to claim a complete acquaintance with scores like of that "Die Meistersinger." We have here scenes from the second act admirably sung by men who are obviously fine in their respective parts—Bohnen as Hans Sachs and Schützendorf as Beckmesser—and the recording gives a result astonishing in its realistic excellence.

**Bohnen, Bettendorf, Oehmann, and Schützendorf.**—The words just written apply exactly to this record, which reproduces the delicious episode in Act II. where Beckmesser endeavours to serenade Eva, but is interrupted by Hans Sachs with his noisy Cobbler's ditty, *Jerum, jerum*; whilst Eva and Walther von Stolzing pursue their flirtation undisturbed beneath the shadow of the elder-tree. Even the quaint voice and horn-call of the night-watchman are included.

**Emmy Bettendorf and Lauritz Melchior.**—On one side of this disc the accomplished German artists continue and, I fancy, conclude their series of duet records from "Lohengrin," the complete set of which is well worth having. On the other side the soprano with chorus furnishes a tuneful selection from Lortzing's "Undine," an opera very popular in Germany that deserves to be known in England. It was first mounted at Hamburg in 1845, and the story is founded upon an Eastern story of a water-nymph without a soul, who obtained one by marrying a mortal, but acquired with it all the pains and penalties of humanity.

**Tino Pattiera.**—I wrote last month about this powerful tenor's "dark, passionate tone" and the invariable use that he makes of it. This monotony of colour matters less, perhaps, in the "Tosca" arias than it would elsewhere, the consequence being unqualified admiration for the breadth and sonority of the performance. The high notes are round enough, but one can enjoy even more the baritone richness of the middle voice.

HERMAN KLEIN.



## SONGS

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

**Dame Nellie Melba** (soprano) accompanied by Harold Craxton: *Clair de Lune* (Moonlight, Szule), in French, and *Swing low, sweet Chariot* (Negro Spiritual, arr. Burleigh). D.B.989 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

**Elena Gerhardt** (soprano) accompanied by Paula Hegner: *Vor dem Fenster*, Op. 14, No. 1 (At the window) (Brahms); and *Die Forelle* (The Trout) (Schubert). D.A.835 (10in., 6s.).

**Stuart Robertson** (baritone): *Ethiopia saluting the Colours* (Charles Wood) and *Son of mine* (from Wallace's *Freebooter Songs*). B.2407 (10in., 3s.).

I am ashamed to have to confess that I don't know Dame Melba's singing well enough to say definitely whether this is a first-rate recording or not. I think that on most machines you will probably find it a very faithful reproduction. At any rate, there is much beauty in the record. Mr. Klein is, I believe, reviewing a Melba record this month.

Gerhardt's record comes just in time for a brief note to be inserted. In any case we may surely look for it in due course in Mr. Klein's *Lieder* articles. One's impression is that it is one of her most delightful records. Watt (see under Columbia) could just learn what's wanted from this, but at the same time, if I could afford both German and English versions I should be content with his as the English version.

Of Charles Wood's *Ethiopia saluting the Colours*, surely one of the finest songs in the language, I cannot now write in detail. Anyhow, this recording is really excellent—almost all one could wish. I thought I remembered one other Stuart Robertson record, but cannot trace one. He should record many of the best contemporary British songs, and could probably with advantage cultivate interpretation yet more. His *Son of mine*, oft-recorded as the song is, is one of the best.

### VOCALION.

**Roy Henderson** (baritone): *Afton Water* (traditional), *Care flies from the lad that is merry* (Arne), and *To Anthea* (Hatton). X.9947 (10in., 3s.).

No singer's records are more welcome than Henderson's, who frequently, as here, makes the right start by choosing well his songs. We should like Vocalion to be more generous to him and to us. He maintains his tendency to over-darken his voice, especially in *Afton Water*; in fact one almost suspects that a little pomposity of mind is creeping into his voice. But do not gain the impression that he has spoilt what is really a first-rate record—even if he has failed to get the words over in the Arne song. We are not told who is the arranger of *Afton Water*. I'm prepared to bet he is Quilter or Cyril Scott or a disciple of one of those two. But, although the song has been brought nicely up to date, I can't bring myself to say it has been murdered; I even like the arrangement, and feel that it helps to bring out the flavour.

### BELTONA.

**Molly O'Callaghan** (contralto): *Caro mio ben* (Giordano) and *Down here* (May H. Brahe), with violin obbligato. 1139 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

**Elliot Dobie** (bass): *The Road to the Isles*, with orchestra, and *The Peat-fire flame*, with piano, from *Songs of the Hebrides* (arr. M. Kennedy-Fraser). 1095 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

A *bel canto* aria from *Molly O'Callaghan* is, I think, a new thing, and is certainly significant in showing that she has a finer voice than we could have known before, and could probably do great things with it. She casts wistful glances at *portamento*—in fact, flirts with it dangerously. But into the rhythmic trap of this slow-motion music she falls headlong. She has no patience with a long wait, neither can she brook any haste, so beats just go overboard at her pleasure. Yet, if all existing records of *Caro mio ben* were compared, probably hers would take a high place. All that I have just said (all of which refers, of course, to



*Caro mio ben*—if you would choose the record for the Brahe song you will certainly be more than satisfied with its rendering—) all this might be said of scores of potentially fine singers; it is those who make themselves exceptions that we are always looking for.

I always feel at a bit of a discount in reviewing Hebridean songs and such like. Perhaps only a Scot, even a Hebridean, could review them satisfactorily. It's all very well to say that for cosmopolitan value a thing needs only cosmopolitan criticism. These songs are in a quite distinct language of their own, and it is hard to feel quite sure that one is not missing their real meanings. Perhaps one can't go far wrong in these two, especially as they are sung with English words (though I have heard a Gael say that some of these *Songs of the Hebrides* translations are not reliable). Yet even in *The Road to the Isles* a correspondent told me a few months ago that I was far too kind to Sir Harry Lauder, and suggested all sorts of new thoughts about the song. Anyhow, *Dobie* has good, firm rhythm, but he frequently breaks it and pauses indefinitely when he comes to the end of a paragraph. There is practically no interpretation, and diction is not good. But pure vocalisation is excellent.

#### EDISON BELL (VELVET FACE).

**Miss Stiles Allen** (soprano) with orchestra: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion* (Handel's *Messiah*) and *Angels ever bright and fair* (Handel's *Theodora*). 700 (12in., 4s.).

*Rejoice greatly* is an aria of which, if well done, there is little to say. There can be few sopranos who will sing it better than this. There is a very slight tendency to tremolo, but it is remarkably slight, under extreme provocation. This criticism applies a little more to the other aria. *Angels ever bright and fair* is really a supreme test of rhythmic sensibility. Miss Stiles Allen is good, but does lag just a wee bit. On the other hand, she breaks the continuity definitely by excessive quickening at "Speed to your own courts." Miss Stiles Allen's voice (I add for those who do not know her) is not at all of the light *coloratura* quality, but of a darker, almost contralto, hue.

#### COLUMBIA.

**W. F. Watt** (tenor): *The Trout* (Die Forelle) and *Hedge Roses* (Haidenröslein) (both Schubert, in English). 4220 (10in., 3s.).

**Eva Turner** (soprano) with orchestra: *O lovely night* (Landon Ronald) and *Goodbye* (Tosti). L.1827 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**William Martin** (tenor): *I hear a thrush at eve* (Eberhart and Cadman) and *A Dream* (Cory and Bartlett). D.1561 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

*W. F. Watt* is a very difficult case. He has, in the past, made some records of no serious account; then, a month or two ago, he started a series of delightful Irish folk-song records, in which class he probably has few equals. Now he brings his Irish charm of voice and personality to Schubert, and the trouble is he tackles two songs which of all Schubert seem most to call for just such simple charm, disarming cold criticism. As a matter of fact, I think he hasn't (at any rate, here) the sophistication which is really needed to get inside these two songs, whatever simplicity must show in the final article—though really *The Trout* does at least need some narrative power as well. It will be extremely interesting to see what he does in the future.

Of *Eva Turner* and *William Martin* there is little to be said. Both are operatic stars of the first water; *Eva Turner* has a quite exceptional voice, and *Martin's* is, at any rate, first class. But neither of them yet calls for serious criticism on this page owing to the types of songs chosen. All that can be said is that these are records *de luxe* of the songs. Columbia, by the way, calls *Goodbye* an English ballad. I don't know if this applies to the words, but the music is as Italian as ever was. And *Eva Turner* rivals in her sobbing the most lachrymose rendering of *On with the molley*.

#### PARLOPHONE.

**Kenneth Ellis** (baritone) with orchestra: *But who may abide?* and *Why do the nations?* (Handel's *Messiah*). E.10539 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

There are few arias in which the orchestra matters more than here, and as this is altogether one of the finest of new recordings, it would probably knock out all existing records of these two famous *Messiah* arias. In particular, *Ellis* rises well to the occasion in *But who may abide?* From his struggle with *Why do the nations?* he does not emerge quite unscathed. C. M. C.

[For other Song Records see under Miscellaneous Reviews.]



## CHORAL

#### COLUMBIA.

**The Choir of St. George's Chapel, Windsor**, recorded in St. George's Chapel under the direction of the Rev. E. H. Fellowes, M.A., Mus. Doc.: *Magnificat in G* (Stanford) and *Magnificat in D minor* (Walmisley); Anthem, *Ascribe unto the Lord* (S. S. Wesley), in two parts. 9174-5 (two 12in., 4s. 6d. each). *Holy, Holy, Holy* (Dykes) and *Nunc Dimittis in G* (Stanford). *When I survey the wondrous Cross* (Tune, Rockingham) and *Nunc Dimittis in B minor* (Tertius Noble). Anthems, *Hosanna to the son of David* (Orlando Gibbons) and *O Lord, the Maker of all things* (Mundy). Anthems, *God is a Spirit* (W. Sterndale Bennett) and *O Saviour of the World* (Goss). 4209-12 (four 10in., 3s. each).

**The Rochester Cathedral Choir**, recorded in the Cathedral: *All people that on earth do dwell* (Old Hundredth) and *Magnificat in B flat* (Stanford). 9165 (12in., 4s. 6d.). *While shepherds watched* (traditional) and *Nunc Dimittis in B flat* (Stanford). 4202 (10in., 3s.).

#### "DAILY EXPRESS" COMMUNITY SINGING RECORDS (COLUMBIA).

**14,000 voices**, on Fulham Football Ground, led by Thos. P. Ratcliff: *Who killed Cock Robin?*, *O come all ye faithful*, and *Loch Lomond*. 9182 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—*Land of Hope and Glory*, *Pack up your troubles, It's a long way to Tipperary*, and *God save the King*. 4256 (10in., 3s.).

**4,000 voices**, at the Cardiff Empire Festival, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, led by Geoffrey Shaw: *Men of Harlech* (sung in English) and *Joanna* (Welsh hymn). Cwm Rhondda and *Hyfrydol* (Welsh hymns). 4229-30 (two 10in., 3s. each).

**2,500 voices**, in the Empire Theatre, Birmingham, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, led by Geoffrey Shaw: *O come, all ye faithful* and *He who would valiant be* (Bunyan's hymn). 9173 (12in., 4s. 6d.).—*Loch Lomond* (Scottish air) and *Shenandoah* (sea shanty, arr. R. R. Terry), with Harold Williams as soloist. 4208 (10in., 3s.).

**Kedroff Male Quartet** (in Russian): *Serenade* (Nocturne by Abt, arr. Kedroff) and *Confredance* (Russian songs, arr. Napravnik). L.1835 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

Musical taste has swung back strongly to Bach (witness, in necessary, the Editor's Christmas symposium), and is well on the way back to the sixteenth century. One of the chief features of this revival is the discovery that unaccompanied vocal music has never since surpassed, if even attained, the heights which were then reached. At the same time we are realising that England in those days not only held her own, but was well in the lead, in music as in literature and, in fact, in most things under the sun. (We can cease patting ourselves on the back when and only when everybody has been made to realise this fact.) No one has done finer work in this revival than Dr. Fellowes, with his complete and probably perfect *English Madrigal School*, his Edition of the Lutenist song-writers, and his edition of many fine anthems. The English Singers have recorded several of the madrigals (including a few splendid new process recordings, of which we keenly look for many more.) Now here is Dr. Fellowes with his own choir. Unfortunately only one of the six records received, No. 4211, gives us sixteenth-century music—probably because this music is not popular or attractive until it is well known. Anyhow, No. 4211 is at least good enough not to disappoint one's expectations, and is therefore invaluable, and you can buy each anthem for a few pence. Of the other records one would choose according to taste. No. 9175, though famous, is surely mostly rather dull, certainly not Wesley's best. If you have a liking for boy soloists you will be transported by No. 9174. No. 4212 contains two of the most popular, and comparatively innocuous, nineteenth-century anthems. We can only pray for more sixteenth-century music from



Windsor, and for the very best recording. Probably for the perfect choral recording which we know can now be made, sentiment will have to be scrapped, and St. George's Choir taken to the studio.

Two of the finest choir records ever issued come from *Rochester Cathedral*. There is no criticism worth making, except that the recording is apt to be a little coarse. But a protest must here be made which applies to both Windsor and Rochester records. What possible reason can there be for recording two Canticles from the same Service on two different discs? If the *Nunc Dimittis* is inherently much shorter than the *Magnificat*, gramophonists would gladly pay for a twelve-inch disc to have the two together, putting up with short measure on one side.

*Community Singing*.—I doubt if anything will ever beat the *Fulham* records for sheer realism. If you are one of the 14,000 who made the records you simply must have both. If not, you must have one, if only to keep a record of what one tune from 14,000 voices sounds like—for it really is 14,000, not a puny two or three thousand—complete with the rattles and whistlings of a football crowd. I think 4256 is the best—and may one suggest with all deference that now that *Land of Hope and Glory* has been recorded by 14,000 voices it might be given a rest?

The *Cardiff* records are the least successful. It seems as if the din, this time indoors, has been too much for the recording. Still, the great tunes on 4230 make some effect.

But, all stunting aside, I am really moved by the *Birmingham* records, especially *Shenandoah* and *O come, and, most of all, Bunyan's* hymn. There is no more glorious hymn in the world than this; words and music, each is splendidly equal to the other. And if you don't yet know this, the record (in which one gladly forgives ludicrously short measure) will send you straight to your Bunyan.

It is interesting that those of us who either laugh or cry at most male quartets rise to the occasion when we hear the *Kedroff Quartet*. It is more than their stunting that attracts; there is as much of that in some of the most objectionable. It is, no doubt, partly because there is here much of the elemental Russian character. But it is more than that. I think one likes these records just as one likes the sea shanty records. We are listening to a body of men who are not transformed into owls or cows when they get up and sing, whereas the typical male choral perpetrations consist of inane fatuities, sloppy sentimentalities, or sheer sanctimony. The *Serenade* gets about as near as I can imagine the *Kedroff Quartet* getting to commonplace sentiment, but the *Contredanse* is at least equal to last month's record.

C. M. C.

## BAND RECORDS

Why I have always been denied the privilege of receiving Homochord records for review I have never known but now that the first batch has reached me I hope I shall continue to receive them regularly as they are really first class. The *Homochord Military Band* sounds to be comparatively small in size, but is very good in quality and possesses a tone very much like that of the *Black Diamonds Band*, which has made so many fine records for the Zonophone Company, while the recording is full in volume. Of the records received so far pride of place must be given to D.1007, which contains Jarnfeldt's *Praeludium* and the famous *Marche Militaire* by Berlioz. The former is very delicately played and the tone-colours of the different reed instruments particularly faithful and the latter notable for the brilliance of tone and fine recording of the tympani. Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance March, No. 4* (D.1006), is not played so often by military bands as it should be, and is a very welcome issue. The reverse of this record is occupied by Tchaikovsky's *March Slav*, and the cutting necessary to compress this march on to one side of a ten-inch disc is done very artistically. The playing and recording of the basses and euphonium in both these is very fine and the cymbals have a real ring in them. A record of very different character is that containing *Salut d'Amour* and *The Bells of St. Malo* (D.1058). These are delicately treated and the necessary rubato is not exaggerated as is so often the case. The remaining two records (D.973 and D.1030) are more notable for the quality of the playing and recording than that of musical content. More than enough has already been printed about *In a Persian Market*, while *Jungle Dreams* and *The Algerian Song* are Mr. Ketelbey at his worst. If he has really been to the fountain-head in all cases for his local colour Mr. Ketelbey must be by this time a serious rival to Mr. Frank Hedges Butler as a globe-trotter. *The March of the little leaden soldiers* contains very little, but as much as possible is made of what there

is. In all these last mentioned items the recording of the various stunt instruments such as gongs, bells, tin trays, and drums of all shapes and sizes is particularly good.

The Columbia record of the Fascisti and Garibaldi hymns (4203) is both very good and interesting. The former is quite a good tune and comes within my province, being played by the *Italian Military Band*. The latter, being sung by an *Italian Massed Choir*, with an orchestral accompaniment, is really beyond my ken, but in case C. M. C. has not received a copy I must say that the choir sing this stirring hymn very flexibly and with excellent effect and that the balance between choir and orchestra is good. This is a record I can cordially recommend to all heights and depths of brow. *Rubinstein March* (4195) is, as might be expected, based on Rubinstein's famous *Melody in F*, and if borrowing an air from another composer is ever excusable this is most emphatically a case for pardon, as the playing of this well-known air in strict march time gives no opportunity for the usual display of mawkish sentimentality. A very good march is made of it, too. The playing of the *Grenadier Guards Band* in this and in *The Happy Warrior March* is, as usual, unimpeachable, and the recording nearly so.

The Marconi Company's process of recording makes the *Welsh Guards Band* sound much more like its real self, though there is a shrillness in the tone of the clarinets when playing forte that I do not like. Apart from this occasional shrillness the *Scottish Patrol* and the *Londonderry Air* (Aco. G.16132) are admirably played and recorded. The same pair of titles are issued on Beltona 1152, and although the label states that they are played by the *Beltona Military Band* it is quite apparent on comparison that except for labels these two records are identical. *The Jolly Airman* and *Cornish Carnival* (Aco. G.16131) are equally good technically, but rather dull musically. The playing of the *Knights of Columbus Band* in the rather poor march bearing their own name and in the naturalistic trifle, *The Forge in the Forest*, is adequate (G.16133).

I am delighted to welcome a new record of Dr. Keighley's musicianly *Midsummer Night's Dream Overture*. The playing of *St. Hilda Colliery Band* is superb, while the recording is as near reality as anything I have heard yet. Two particularly pleasing bits of playing are that of the soprano early on side two and the braying of the muted trombone. I do not like to criticise such a record, but must express regret that it was thought necessary to cut such good music to make it fit on to one record.

The *Life Guards Band* have given us two old favourites in *The Gladiator's Farewell* and *The Children of the Regiment* marches (Voc. K.05284). The playing is very supple and full of verve, and although the bass section still needs "fattening" the recording is splendid.

The Zonophone Company have followed the *Trial by Jury Selection* with one from *Ruddigore* (A.310) and I sincerely hope that this means that we are to have, all in good time, a series of selections from the lesser-known Sullivan operas by the *Black Diamonds Band*. This is a magnificent record almost beyond criticism and deserves a great sale.

*Martha Overture*, played by *Black Dyke Mills Band* (Winnee 4576) is by far the best record made by this band for a long time. The tone is very finely graded and the playing of all sections of the band is very good indeed. The basses are once more a shade too retiring, otherwise the recording is good. The ever popular *Valse Triste* is nicely played by the *Scots Guards Band* (Winner 4580), and the tone-colours of the various instruments are very true to life, but the same band's playing of *The Ride of the Valkyries* is dreadfully tame and suggests the most docile of ladies' cobs rather than the winged steeds of the wild maidens of Valhalla.

*Late Arrivals*.—The twelve old dances included in *Old English Folk Dances* (Aco. G.16147) are delightfully naive and the playing of the *Welsh Guards Band* is appropriately fresh and clean cut. This record should prove very popular. On the other hand, I can hardly find anything good to say about the two marches *Forward Again* and *Sans Souci* (Aco. G.16037), as the intonation of the *British Legion Headquarters Military Band* is very imperfect and both attack and release are very ragged in places.

The *Life Guards Band* have now added to their series of selections from the older musical comedies and comic operas one from *The Geisha* (Voc. K.05289), and a very pleasing selection it is. The playing is nicely restrained and though the bass section could do with still more prominence, the rest of the inner parts and the middle of the band are heard almost to perfection. A special word of praise is due to Trumpet-major Harman for his playing of *The Amorous Goldfish*.

W. A. C.



## MISCELLANEOUS

**Songs.**—**Doris Vane** makes a fine record of *Comin' through the rye* and *Home Sweet Home* on Col. 9176 (12in., 4s. 6d.). That old favourite, *Stone-cracker John*, is splendidly sung by **Tom Kinniburgh** (Imperial 1702, 2s.) and by **Harry Dearth** (H.M.V., E.448, 4s. 6d.), but unless you want *Tommy Lad* as well, the former with *Up from Somerset* on the reverse, is the better value for money. *I know of two bright eyes*, that ancient sweetmeat, is more powerfully sung by **Walter Widdop** (H.M.V., E.449, 4s. 6d.) with Woodforde-Finden's *A Request*, than by **Victor Carne** (Voc. X.9949, 3s.), who couples it with *O Sole Mio* in English; but the latter is more in the spirit of the songs. **Eva Turner** is very popular just now, and *Because* and *Sometimes in my Dreams* (Col. D.1563, 4s. 6d.) will please the admirers of her splendid voice, however much her choice of songs distresses me, who much prefer such songs as *To Anthea* and *Drink to me only* (Quilter's arrangement), sung well by **Harry Goddard** on Aco. G.16143 (2s. 6d.). The wireless—I almost wrote "spineless"—votaries of **Rex Palmer** will want his *O mistress mine* and *In your dear eyes* (Col. 4199, 3s.), but I prefer **Robert Layton** in *Sea Haven* and *The deep sea roads*, two robust nonentities on Regal G.8757 (2s. 6d.). But more than all these I prefer **Edna Thomas** back again to delight us and worthily recorded on Col. 4196 and 4197 (3s. each) in *Kentucky Babe*, two spirituals, and *Street Cries of New Orleans*. What lovely rhythm she has, and what a lovely speaking and singing voice!

In another genre is one of the Vocalion series of Gilbert and Sullivan records, that precious duet *None shall part us*, sung by **Noel Eadie** and **Cavan O'Connor**, with *When I went to the bar*, sung by **John Buckley** (Voc. X.9945, 3s.). This may or may not satisfy the Savoyards; I found it a great relief. Similarly I thoroughly enjoyed a 12in. Zonophone (A.312, 4s.) containing this and other "vocal gems" from *Iolanthe* which might not pass muster with the purists. The clarity of the words is wonderful.

**Restaurant Music.**—Perhaps the most satisfying of these is an arrangement of Mendelssohn's *Rondo Capriccioso* and one of Handel's *Largo* as played by the **J. H. Squire Celeste Octet** (Col. 9179, 12in., 4s. 6d.); but two other arrangements, Schubert's *Moment Musical* and Moszkowski's *Serenade* are equally well played by the same combination on Col. 4194 (3s.). I do not much care for Willoughby's arrangement of *Drink to me only*, played by the **St. James's String Sextet**, with Beethoven's *Minuet* on the reverse (Col. 4216, 3s.); but those who like song-transcriptions will find Schumann's *Du meine Seele* and Reynaldo Hahn's *Mai* well done by **Jean Lensen and his Orchestra** on Col. 4214 (3s.). The **Edith Lorand Orchestra** has the proper Austrian lilt in two waltzes, *Merry Vienna* and *Dr. Drla's Vienna Waltz* on Parlo. E.10531 (12in., 4s. 6d.) and some fresh tunes in Paul Schramm's *Night Song* and in *Venetian Bells* (Parlo. E.10532, 12in., 4s. 6d.). Smaller ensembles record *Wondering and Paradise Valley and you* (**Max Terr Trio**, Actuelle 11244, 2s. 6d.) and Mendelssohn's *Spring Song* and Thomé's *Simple Aveu* (H.M.V., B.2404, 3s.).

There is a Balalaika record of *Brightly shines the moon* and *Souvenir de Gatchino* on Voc. X.9950 (3s.) which would be hard to beat, and the **A and P Gypsies** follow up their previous success with *Faréwell, Farewell, my village and Gipsy moon* on Brunswick 3188 (3s.). These are both records to hear. The **Circolo Mandolinistico** record of the *Prelude to Act 3* of Mascagni's opera *Si*, is delightful on Col. 4221 (3s.).

More ambitious perhaps than mere restaurant music is a record by the **New Light Symphony Orchestra** on H.M.V., C.1308 (12in., 4s. 6d.). It contains Orth's *In a clock store*, which seems to me a poor thing, and Voelker's *A hunt in the Black Forest*, which is thrilling. The dawn breaks upon a cuckoo, a stage bird, and a cock; a church bell rings, the hunting horn sounds, the huntsman comes clattering up the tarmac road at the gallop, and you are not surprised to hear that he has to stop at the smithy. The shoeing takes some time, but is jocund; then a fanfare, and off he goes again. The seals begin to bark, and from this point to the kill it is all terribly exciting and you feel inclined to share in the final cheer. The orchestra, property man, and recorders perform their parts *sans peur et sans reproche*.

**Musical Comedies.**—Thank goodness I haven't got to choose between the *Queen High Selection* as played by **Carl Fenton's Orchestra** in America (Brunswick 20047, 12in., 4s. 6d.) and by **Savoy Orpheans** at the Savoy Hotel (H.M.V., C.1306, 12in., 4s. 6d.). The styles are quite different, but both are superb bits of playing and recording. The Brunswick has an admirable "vocal gems"

from the same play on the back, the H.M.V. a *Princess Charming Selection*. I cannot imagine anyone buying either record without regretting the other. Of the "Lido Lady" tunes I slightly prefer **Percival Mackey's Band's Selection** (Col. 9177, 12in., 4s. 6d.) to that of the Savoy Orpheans (H.M.V., C.1310, 12in., 4s. 6d.), but both are excellent, and if you want a cheaper record the *Selection* by the **New Regenta Orchestra** (Regal G.8759, 2s. 6d.) is more than adequate. The three 10in. records of the play with the original artists are a great credit to Columbia: Phyllis Dare, Cicely Courtneidge, Harold French, and Jack Hulbert all have remarkably good recording voices, though sometimes they seem to be almost embarrassingly near to the microphone, and no one need hesitate to buy the songs that they want on Col. 4226, 4227, and 4228 (3s. each). Finally, a belated record of "gems" from "Sunny" in two parts on Voc. K.05290 (12in., 4s. 6d.) is worth noting. **Howett Worster** comes out splendidly in it.

**Instrumental.**—Roumanian music played by **Gica and Constantine Joneseu** (violin and piano), the leaders of Queen Marie's orchestra, which tours Europe for the exclusive delectation of crowned heads—but like their queen they have condescended to the democracy of America—is to be heard on Brunswick 3182 (3s.). I admire the players more than the music, but they are very good indeed. **Andjelkovitch** plays *Because I love you* and *I want you* so very charmingly (Aco. G.16145, 2s. 6d.), but like **Fradkin** and **Sandler** and other violinists she is worthy of better things. I have a weakness for the serenades of Pierné and Drdla and welcome them together on Regal G.8755 (2s. 6d.), well played by **Manuello**. I admit, too, that I prefer the cinema organ to the cinema orchestra usually, and shall give a good mark to **Jesse Crawford** for *Meadow Lark* and *Ting-a-ling* (H.M.V., B.2461, 3s.), though I cannot face the whole of the organ solo of **Bernard Russell**—*In a Monastery Garden*, in two parts—on Aco. G.16146 (2s. 6d.). The "novelty" of **Frank Ferera's** steel guitar has worn off, but his skill is undiminished (Regal G.8769, 2s. 6d.); the best accordeon record is undoubtedly "**Dan Wyper**" in Irish and Scotch reels (Imperial 1701, 2s.); and **Victor Sterling's** xylophone solos in two G. F. Abbey pieces are, as you would expect, fine performances technically (Regal G.8754, 2s. 6d.).

I commend especially to exiles the record made at St. Margaret's Church at Westminster with church bells ringing, Big Ben striking, the bourdon of street traffic, and the emerging organ-playing of **Stanley Roper**. For what it sets out to do it is admirable in arrangement and recording (H.M.V., B.2398, 3s.).

I was a little bewildered by *The adventures of 'Arry, Enmy and Joe* of the **London Sketch Company** on Col. 4222, 4223, and 4224 (3s. each), but their potted travels round the world are thoroughly good clean fun which should be very popular.

**Americanisms.**—There's nothing so good to report this month as the *Bridget O'Flynn* record of **Aileen Stanley and Billy Murray** of last month (H.M.V., B.2392, 3s.), but I must draw your special attention to **Annette Hanshaw**, whose record of *Black Bottom* and *Lay me down to sleep in Carolina* (Actuelle 11248, 2s. 6d.) seems to me well worth possessing for the sake of its rhythm. What a contrast in methods to **Lee Morse** singing *He's still my baby* (Actuelle 11247, 2s. 6d.) in the hottest of styles—a tune which strikes me as better sung by **Wendell Hall** (Brunswick 3330, 3s.), whose baby is, of course, female; but both are first class, and so is **Nick Lucas**, with a capital accompaniment, in *Precious* and *I'd like to call you my sweetheart* (Brunswick 3369, 3s.). The latter—again duplication and varied methods—is coupled with the foolish *Hum your troubles away* by **Johnny Marvin** on H.M.V., B.2402 (3s.), and he has a sympathetic voice too. One welcomes the rowdy arrival of **Jay C. Flippen and his Gang** on Actuelle 11255 (2s. 6d.), but deprecates their "heat" and marvellous diction being wasted on the *vieux jeu* of *How many times* and *Hard-to-get Gertie*. The fact is that most of these American importations are at least three months old; and if a tune is sure to be popular it finds its way into our recording rooms much more quickly. Thus **Cliff Edwards** is at his best in *I want to be known as Susie's feller* and *I can't get over a girl like you* (Actuelle 11253, 3s.), and **Willard Robison**, singing to the piano, gives a charming version of his own songs, *Lonely acres* and *Mary Lou* (Actuelle 11254, 2s. 6d.). I could wish they had been the first records of the tunes to appear in this country. **Ed Smalle**, recording in England, wastes his great talents on *Breezin' along with the breeze* and *In my gondola* (Col. 4285, 3s.), already obsolete; and **Russell Jones** goes one worse with *Bye-bye Blackbird* and *Hi-diddle-diddle* (Col. 4257, 3s.). At the same time, if you have not already got these tunes, all the above list will please you.



Of the duettists I'm not surprised to see **Correll and Gosden** ("Sam 'n Henry") promoted to H.M.V. (B.2405, 3s.), from Zonophone. Their record for the latter (Zono. 2866, 2s. 6d.) of *Susie's feller* and *Georgianna* is charmingly quiet and adroit. So, too, of course, are **Layton and Johnstone**, still (as the Editor would say) in full spate, with three records to add to their pile, Columbia 4232, 4233, and 4234 (3s. each). I can't choose between them, the level is so steady. Vocalion is not so judicious with its coloured duettists, **Leslie Hutchinson and Opal Cooper**, who have been singing at the Café de Paris (Voc. X.9952, 3s.). I could do without the hefty partner with the big voice and should prefer those naughty little songs which the pianist sings so well alone.

**Gleanings.**—There remain nearly forty records which I have heard this month. I can safely leave the "popular vocalists" to "H. T. B.," though their records, however well sung and recorded, are the last things that I should recommend the newly poor to spend a bottom half dollar on. I hope he will give a good word to **Bobbie Gray** (Winner), **Irving Kaufman**, **Leslie Newton**, **Eric Sims** (Actuelle), **Barrington Hooper** (Zonophone) and **John Thorpe** (Imperial). The 1927 *Songs Hits Medley* on Regal G.8750 and 8751 (2s. 6d. each) is enough for most people.

The **Brox Sisters** (Zono. 2867, 2s. 6d.) are very simply attractive; one of **Al Siegel's** piano records (Zono. 2862, 2s. 6d.) is as welcome as **Boyd Senter's** comic saxophone solos (Actuelle 11245, 2s. 6d.). **Arnold Greir** as usual makes a good record of *Valse Triste* and *Rest at Eventide* (Zono. 2865, 2s. 6d.). The **Melody Makers** (Voc. X.9951, 3s.), **Excelsior Male Voice Quartette** (Regal G.8770, 2s. 6d.) and **The Ramblers** (Winner 4573, 2s. 6d.) are in good form; and a popular record of massed voices will be Brunswick 3153 (3s.) with fine production and attack in *O Salutaris* and *Jesu Dulcis Memoria*, but the music is only so so.

Taking it all round, my first prize this month goes to **Annette Hanshaw**. I wonder if Malcolm McEachern will come to me or to "C.M.C." when he is recorded as Jetsam?

PEPPERING.

## "FINGER MAGIC"

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## NEW-POOR RECORDS

Machine used, Peridulce; sound-box, Peridulce; needles, Euphonic.

**ACO.**—John Thorne, my favourite BARITONE, most delightfully sings a group of songs, two of them by M. S. Baxter, *In Corbar Woods* and *Across the Valley*, and the third, *To the Night*, by Carl Bohm (2s. 6d.). Peggy Cochrane has a VIOLIN with piano record, *Valse Caressante* (2s. 6d.). Billy Desmond (baritone) sings a very POPULAR SONG, *Let's all go to Mary's house*, better than I have heard it sung before.

**BELTONA.**—What a delight it is to find a really grand orchestral accompaniment to a song, and one with the kettle-drums showing in their true proportion. Everyone who has a modern gramophone capable of reproducing drum tone should get *The Glory of the Sea* (Sanderson), sung by Howard Fry, BASS (4s. 6d.). The best BARITONE rendering I have of the song *Just a Rose in old Killarney* is by Charles Barry (2s. 6d.). VOCAL DUET, with John Roberts taking one part, *Perhaps you'll think of me* (2s. 6d.). SCOTTISH NUMBER: *Scottish Patrol*, military band (2s. 6d.). Now here is a very rare thing, a SPOKEN RECORD by a lady, and one in which every word is clear. Miss Bertha Waddell gives a series of four short recitations imitating a child's voice, *Vespers* (2s. 6d.).

**HOMOCHORD.**—Last month the Editor spoke very highly of Chevalier H. Solloway's violin playing. On two visits to this country, one about six months ago and one quite recently, Solloway was playing for broadcasting, so that many hundreds of thousands of listeners-in must be well acquainted with his fine tone and perfect technique. All his favourite solos have been recorded on this list with piano accompaniments, and the recording both of the violin and the piano is wholly satisfactory and properly proportionate. I notice in the gramophone note in a prominent journal an expressed regret that Schumann's *Etudes Symphoniques* have not been recorded. Readers of this column know they have been recorded on three 12in. discs at 4s. each on this list. The recording is full and the piano tone true. The ORGAN solo this month is *Sanctuary of the Heart* (2s. 6d.). Records by the exquisite SMALL MILITARY BAND are *Flying Dutchman* (4s.) and *Crown Diamonds* (4s.).

**IMPERIAL.**—Two delightful WALTZES on one two-shilling disc are *Because I love you* and *Trail of dreams*. Tom Kinniburgh, BASS, sings *Stone-cracker John* (2s.).

**PARLOPHONE.**—Owing to the shortness of the month I have not heard the March issues in time for press.

**REGAL.**—The best VIOLIN AND PIANO half-crown record this month is, in my opinion, Manuella's "Rosamunde" *Ballet Music, Andantino*.

**VELVET FACE.**—This month the electrical recording, carried out entirely by the Edison Bell staff, is better than ever and, in my opinion, second to none in any particular and in the aggregate better than the average. The record that takes my fancy most is a fairylike ORCHESTRAL double, *Valse Gracieuse*, from German's "Suite in D minor" (4s.). An oratorio double most charmingly sung by Miss Stiles Allen, *Rejoice greatly* and *Angels ever bright and fair* (4s.). LIGHT SOPRANO: Aida Poggetti sings in Italian *Musetta's Song* from "La Bohème" and in French *Le Toreador* from "Don Cezar de Bazan" (4s.).

**WINNER.**—A more sympathetic and artistic WHISPERING BARITONE than Bobby Gray I think it would be impossible to find, his accompaniments could not be better played, nor could he be more adequately recorded. *Roses remind me of you* (2s. 6d.). A series of GRAND ORGAN records showing fully recorded 16-foot tone has been begun this month with Dvorák's *Humoreske* (2s. 6d.).

**VOCALION.**—A wholly satisfactory PIANOFORTE record comprises an *Etude in E minor* and a series of short preludes by Chopin, played by York Bowen.

**ULTIMATE SELECTION.**—ORCHESTRAL: *Valse Gracieuse* (V.F.). GRAND ORGAN: *Humoreske* (WINNER). LIGHT SOPRANO: *Musetta's Song* (V.F.). SACRED: *Rejoice Greatly* (V.F.). BARITONE: (10in.): *In Corbar Woods* (ACO); (12in.): *The Glory of the Sea* (BELTONA). WHISPERING BARITONE: *Roses remind me of you* (WINNER). MILITARY BAND: *Crown Diamonds* (HOMO.). VIOLIN: *Rosamunde* (REGAL).

H. T. B.





## DANCE NOTES

By J. W. G.

In the following all are fox-trots unless otherwise marked. Thick type indicates a record that you can order safely, two stars and one star mark the next grades, and no star at all means that the record is worth hearing if you want that tune or that band. Records which in my opinion are comparatively not worth consideration are not mentioned at all. I welcome the Piccadilly Revels Band and the Crichton Lyricals as newcomers this month, and should like to suggest Charlie Kunz and his Chez Henri band to the recording companies.

ACO (2s. 6d. each).

So Aco has got Syd Roy and his Lyricals! My heartiest congratulations. They have built up a great reputation at the Café de Paris, on the halls, and in country houses, and as they have been playing together (the seven of them) for the last four years, their ensemble and rhythm make them, to my mind, as good as any dance band in London at present. Harry Bidgood's recording combination is a very strong one and scores by experience, but the Lyricals will do better, I'm sure, later on, too. As last month the March list is very good all through.

G.16144.—*Black bottom* and *Crazy quilt*, piano duets (Harry Bidgood and Sam Bogen). Rather monotonous.

G.16152.—*Climbing up the ladder of love* (V.) and *Pirate of my dreams* (V.) (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra).

G.16153.—*She's still my baby* (V.) and *I'm sailing off to China* (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra).

G.16154.—*Lonely eyes* (V.) and *What are we waiting for* (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra).

G.16155.—*How could Red Riding Hood?* (V.) and *Thanks to you* (V.) (The Lyricals of the Café de Paris, London). Tunes unworthy of the playing.

G.16156.—*It made you happy when you made me cry* (V.) and *Indian Butterfly Naomi* (the Lyricals of the Café de Paris, London). The same comment.

ACTUELLE (2s. 6d. each).

The acrid tone of these records is a thing which you either dislike or else find very stimulating. At any rate, they represent some of the very best American bands and I select the following (11234 and 11235 were not sent for review).

11237.—*Any Ice to-day, lady?* (V.) and *In a little garden* (V.) (Sam Lanin and his Orchestra). Fast and very well played.

11238.—*\*\*For my sweetheart* (Sam Lanin and his Orchestra) and *\*\*Cross your heart* ("Queen High") (John Sylvester and his Orchestra).

11240.—*\*\*Moonlight on the Ganges* (Harry Reser and his Orchestra) and *\*\*Scatter your smiles* (V.) (Fleming's Dance Band). Both sides good.

11241.—*\*Oh! If only I had you!* (Nathan Glantz and his Orchestra) and *\*Climbing up the ladder of love* (Willie Creager and his Orchestra). Good; better than the Brunswick one of the latter tune.

11243.—*Baby face* (V.) (Joe Candulla and his Orchestra) and *\*\*And then, I forget* (Fred Rich and his Orchestra). The latter is an excellent fox-trot in the French style.

BELTONA (2s. 6d. each).

These four are a capital set from the February bulletin. They have big volume, but are not unpleasantly loud; plenty of

variety in orchestration and good choice of tunes. I commend the example of Beltona in setting a high standard in dance records, and only putting out a reasonable number every month.

1144.—*How many times* (V.) and *Just a little longer* (V.) (the Sutherland Dance Orchestra). An excellent record.

1145.—*\*\*Any ice to-day, lady?* (V.) (the Avenue Dance Orchestra) and *There's a little white house* (V.) (the Palm Beach Players). Clean, lively playing. The latter tune is not so good, but is played well.

1146.—*Here in my arms* from "Lido Lady" and *Tinker Tailor* from "Happy-go-Lucky" (the Avenue Dance Orchestra).

1149.—*Mock the Mocking Bird* (V.) and *She's still my baby* (V.) (the Sutherland Dance Orchestra). These are both excellent tunes, finely played.

BRUNSWICK (3s. each).

Naturally one expects the best from Brunswick and I have ruthlessly omitted the few in the February list which seemed to me not quite up to the very high standard.

3306.—*Blame it on the waltz* and *To-night you belong to me* (waltzes) (the Regent Club Orchestra).

3356.—*\*\*A little music in the moonlight* and *\*I'd love to call you my sweetheart* (Park Lane Orchestra).

3351.—*Messin' around* and *Heebie Jeebies* (Bud Jackson's Swanee Serenaders). These for pep and rhythm!

3344.—*\*Climbing up the ladder of love* and *\*Hugs and Kisses* (Harold Leonard and his Waldorf Astoria Orchestra).

3363.—*Just a little longer* and *Idolizing* (Park Lane Orchestra). Good choruses for these "smooth" fox-trots.

3375.—*I've grown so lonesome thinking of you* and *Take in the sun, hang out the moon* (*Rock me in a cradle of dreams*) (the Clevelanders). Excellent "smooth" fox-trots.

COLUMBIA (3s.).

The Piccadilly Revels Band is a great acquisition and starts off with a first-class lot of records. To avoid misunderstanding let me point out that *Mon Paris* is the same tune as *But not to-day* in "Lido Lady." I omit Jay Whidden's record of it as distinctly inferior to that of the Piccadilly Revels Band, which is nearly as good as the H.M.V. (Rio Grande) record mentioned below. It is a very French one-step hovering between a one-step and a Paso-doble.

4249.—*\*\*Dream of love and you* and *\*\*Brown Sugar* (Piccadilly Revels Band). The former is *Liebestraum*, the latter very well played.

4250.—*But not to-day* (one-step) and *Try again to-morrow* from "Lido Lady" (Piccadilly Revels Band).

4254.—*Mock the mocking bird* and *Perhaps you'll think of me* (waltz) (Piccadilly Revels Band). A glorious waltz in perfect time.

4255.—*\*\*My cutie's due at two to two to-day* and *\*\*Lonely eyes* (Piccadilly Revels Band). Good and amusing.

4251.—*Always some new baby* and *Too many tots make you totter* (Jay Whidden and his New Midnight Follies Band). Excellent; the latter is an amusing bibulous tune.

4239.—*\*\*I can't get over a girl like you* and *\*Blues* (*My naughty sweetie gives to me*) (Ted Lewis and his Band). Not Ted Lewis at his very best, but the former is very well played.

4240.—*\*\*Moonlight and roses* (waltz) and *\*\*For my sweetheart* (Jay Whidden and his New Midnight Follies Band). Delightful.

4242.—*\*I don't know, I can't say* (V.) and *Who could be more wonderful than you* (V.) (Jay Whidden and his New Midnight Follies Band).

4244.—*Why did you leave me when I love you* (V.) and *\*\*Wimmin'*, *Aaah!* (Percival Mackey's Band). The latter is first class, almost the best of the lot; but the former is dull.

4246.—*Oh! how I love Bulgarians* (one-step, V.) (the Denza Dance Band) and *Just a Bird's-eye view* (V.) (the Ipana Troubadours).



- 4247.—\**Lay me down to sleep in Carolina* (V.) and \**It's a happy old world after all* (V.) (the Denza Dance Band).  
 4248.—\**Hoodle-dee-doo-dee-doodoo* (V.) and *Katinka* (V.) (the Denza Dance Band). Excellent.

## HIS MASTER'S VOICE (3s. each).

Mid-February.

- B.5198.—\**Neapolitan Nights* (waltz) and \**Hop skip* (Savoy Orpheans). Good rhythm.  
 B.5194.—\**Pining for you* (Savoy Orpheans) and \**When lights are low in Cairo* (Savoy Havana Band). *Pining* is a poor tune, but the other is a very good Eastern tune.  
 B.5195.—\**I can't get over a girl like you* (one-step) and *It won't be long now* (Savoy Havana Band).  
 B.5197.—\**I've never seen a straight banana* (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra) and \**I never cried before I met you* (Jack Hylton's Kit-Kat Band). Rather tiresome tunes well played.  
 B.5192.—\**When you smile and Tinker Tailor* from "Happy-go-Lucky" (Jack Hylton's Kit-Kat Band). Excellent.  
 B.5193.—\**The Trebla* and *Mon Paris* (one-step) (Rio Grande Tango Band). If only the public would take up the Trebla! *Mon Paris*: see my note to Columbians.  
 B.5199.—\**Meadow lark* and *Just a little lady* (waltz) (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra).

March.

Of the March records only one has arrived in time,

- B.5200.—\**She's still my baby* and *Niña* (Jack Hylton's Hyltonians), and it is very good. So is the special record of *Shepherd of the Hills* (V.) on B.5207, the tune that Horatio Nicholls telephoned to Jack Hylton from New York, with *Rhythm is the thing*, Charleston (V.), on the back. When are we to hear *The Girl Friend*, which is said to be the rage now?

## IMPERIAL (2s. each).

These seem to me not so good as usual, and as Imperials have so often to be chosen for special praise in these notes I will venture to mark them down this time.

- 1699.—\**Rhythm of the day* and *Yiddisha Charleston* (Geoffrey Gelder and his Kettner's Five). Rather weak.  
 1698.—\**Alice's 'ouse* (one-step, V.) and *The road to Loch Lomond* (V.) (Zimpler and his Band).  
 1697.—\**Mary Lou* (V.) and *Drifting and dreaming* (Lou Gold's Dance Orchestra).  
 1696.—\**That's why I love you* and \**Breezin' along with the breeze* (Hollywood Dance Orchestra).  
 1695.—\**Because I love you* and *Trail of dreams* (Adrian Schubert's Salon Dance Orchestra).

## PARLOPHONE (2s. 6d. each).

These came late, and I have not heard 5742. Of the others I omit all but the very good.

- E.5725.—\**Tinker Tailor* (V.) and *When you smile* from "Happy-go-Lucky" (V.) (Ronnie Munro and his Dance Orchestra). Sydney Nesbitt sings excellently in both these good tunes.  
 E.5726.—\**Falling in love with you* from "Happy-go-lucky" and \**Ting-a-ling* (waltzes) (the Yellow Jackets). Two good waltzes perfectly played, except for the bells in the latter which are out of tune.  
 E.5735.—\**I love the moonlight* (V.) and \**Hello! Bluebird* (V.) (Mike Markel's Orchestra).  
 E.5736.—\**Cherie, I love you and Night of love* (Edith Lorand Orchestra). A charming disc, beautifully played. Lovers beware! I've never heard a waltz so well played.

Some "hundred per cent." Blues and Charleston records by negro bands have been made by Parlophone for Keith Prowse to sell exclusively (3s. each). For rhythm they are second to none, and it is a good idea of Keith Prowse to give us a chance of hearing them. Try them!

## REGAL (2s. 6d.).

I was wondering what had happened to the playing of the Corona Dance Orchestra and the Raymond Dance Band till I came in turn to G.8774, *Every little maid* and *Babying you* from "Princess Charming," played by the latter. The improvement was so striking that I suddenly realised that the five previous records were apparently old recordings. Let anyone who says that he doesn't care for electric recording try these and then that! It is an attractive record, and so is G.8786, *Black bottom*, "super Charleston," and *The more we are together* (V.); and G.8787, *Meadow Lark* (V.), and *Don't be angry with me* (V.), also played by the Raymond Dance Band.

## VOCALION (3s.).

Teddy Brown has apparently deserted Imperial for Vocalion. He and Billy Mayerl hold their own against the American Riverside Band.

- X.9854.—\**When you smile* from "Happy-go-Lucky" and *Climbing the ladder of love* (Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Band). A superb record with excellent xylophone effects.  
 X.9855.—\**Song of Shanghai* and \**Baby face* (Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Band). The latter has a xylophone solo.  
 X.9856.—\**Reaching for the moon* (V.) and *Cuckoo* (Billy Mayerl and his Vocalion Orchestra). Piano solo in the latter.  
 X.9857.—\**Just a rose in Old Killarney* (waltz) (Billy Mayerl and his Vocalion Orchestra) and \**A little music in the moonlight* (V.) (the Riverside Dance Band). It may offend some readers, but I find these waltzes about Killarney rather tiresome. The other side is excellent in every way and better than the Brunswick.  
 X.9858.—\**Black bottom Betty* (V.) and \**That's a good girl* (V.) (the Riverside Dance Band). *Black bottom Betty* is a most attractive tune.  
 X.9859.—\**Take in the sun, hang out the moon* (V.) and \**Whiskers* (V.) (the Riverside Dance Band).

## WINNER (2s. 6d. each.).

The Regent Dance Orchestra plays in a sound way if you want to hear the tune at a distance, in dancing halls or teaching classes. It is only to the specialist that they err on the side of ordinariness. The Pavilion Players are better.

- 4571.—\**Baby face* (V.) and *I can't get over a girl like you* (V.) (Regent Dance Orchestra).  
 4572.—\**Sunny Swanee* (V.) and \**Deep Henderson* (Regent Dance Orchestra).  
 4578.—\**Brown eyes in your dreams* (V.) and *Let's go to Jericho* (Regent Dance Orchestra).  
 4579.—\**What a man* (V.) and \**Blue Bonnet* (V.) (Pavilion Players).

## ZONOPHONE (2s. 6d. each.).

The Zonophones this month are not quite as good as the single one sent last month. But *Black Bottom* will hold its own with any version, only it is coupled with a very dull waltz. The problem of coupling dance records is a subtle one, I should think.

- 2869.—\**Black Bottom* and *To-night you belong to me* (waltz) (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra).  
 2870.—\**Dismal Desmond* and *I'll follow your footsteps* (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra).  
 2871.—\**Any Ice to-day Lady?* and \**Let's all go to Mary's House* (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra). *Any Ice* is not as good as other versions this month.  
 2872.—\**She's still my Baby* and *Memories of You* (Carlton Hotel Dance Orchestra).  
 2873.—\**How could Red Riding Hood?* and *Perhaps you'll think of me* (waltz) (Devonshire Restaurant Dance Band). The latter is a poor waltz.  
 2874.—\**Oh! Marie* and *Precious* (Devonshire Restaurant Dance Band). The former is attractive in the Neapolitan style.



# ARMCHAIR PHONATICS

By P. WILSON

## Electrical Reproduction

**M**R. BALMAIN'S letter in the February issue seems to call for some reply from me. With his personal challenge to the Panatrope I am not concerned, but I think his remarks on electrical reproducers generally require some qualification.

I don't know why he says that his reasons for thinking that the future lies with the electrical system are different from mine. In my December article I was merely concerned to give expression to my faith and to point out some of the consequences of the adoption of that system. Limitations of space prevented me from developing my reasons, which, in fact, are many and varied. The principal one is that in an electrical reproducer control over both quality and volume of reproduction is far more delicate and accurate than in an ordinary gramophone. In the electrical art we can vary inductances and capacities independently, whereas, mechanically, every change of the mass of a moving part carries with it a modification of its elastic qualities. It follows, of course, that an electrical instrument is much more sensitive than a purely mechanical one, much more liable to be upset, and therefore more difficult to commercialise. A sensitive instrument badly designed or wrongly used is capable of giving most atrocious results.

This leads me to my second point which, I am afraid, will seem most heretical to many gramophiles. The average wireless reproduction is certainly not to be compared with the average gramophone reproduction. But I assert, with some knowledge and with every sense of responsibility, that it is possible to-day to get a far finer reproduction from broadcasting than it is from the gramophone. The enormous difference between the best and the average in wireless is due partly to the very sensitiveness of the apparatus, partly to the fact that people will overload their valves and partly to the dearth of really good loud-speakers. One would have thought that the wireless trade would have been ready to learn a few lessons from the experience of gramophonists. But no; manufacturers will go on producing loud-speakers with small horns and large diaphragms. I observe that the Editor has used an Amplion unit with the large horn I designed for the Expert Committee. There, I think, he made a sorry mistake. By far the best unit to use with that horn (either the AW or the BW pattern) is the Brown type U/GA, price £2. Perhaps I may be pardoned a little nepotism when I say that this particular combination forms incomparably the best horn loud-

speaker I have yet heard, and in many respects can give points to even the best of the cones. With a simple detector, two stages of resistance-coupled low frequency amplification and this loud-speaker the reception from the local broadcasting station or Daventry is so full and free from distortion that one gets the illusion of being in the dress circle of the theatre or concert-hall. I hasten to add that this confession only means that I have taken on a new love without discarding the old! Technical excellence in broadcasting can never quite compensate for lack of personal choice in programmes and artists.

Notwithstanding all this, however, I feel bound to say that Mr. Balmain's argument against cone loud-speakers is based upon a clear non-sequitur. Because it is true that in gramophone work, where we have a limited amount of energy at our disposal, it is best to use a small, light diaphragm coupled to a large horn, it by no means follows *a priori* that the same conditions apply to loud-speaker work where we can command a practically unlimited energy supply. No well-informed person, I fancy, would be bold enough to assert definitely that the future lies with the *cone* loud-speaker, and in my article I was careful to add the words "or other improved type." At present the cone undoubtedly favours lower frequencies and cuts off some of the higher ones, which is precisely the opposite effect from that given by horns. But with the pending development of cellulose acetate it seems to me that there is some possibility of getting a hornless loud-speaker, of extremely light moving parts, with a range up to a frequency of about 10,000 vibrations a second. That, with the increased energy which the electrical system gives us, ought to be sufficient to satisfy the most prickly musical taste.

Above all let us not be too dogmatic in our talk about "laws of nature." It has an uncomfortable habit of turning out to be merely an imperfect human generalisation after all.

P. WILSON.

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# CREDE EXPERTO

By OUR EXPERT COMMITTEE

SOUND-BOXES FOR ELECTRIC RECORDS—*continued.*

SINCE a horn amplifier of the usual size does not respond effectively to deep bass notes, it might seem reasonable to suppose that a balance could be obtained by making the sound-box favour the bass at the expense of the treble and within narrow limits that is probably the case. There are, however, two serious objections to this method of procedure. The first is that it does not damp out sufficiently the natural resonances of the diaphragm and other moving parts of the sound-box with the result that the reproduction becomes hollow and uneven. We need the impedance of a large horn to "load" the sound-box and make it approximately aperiodic. The response of a sound-box is substantially altered by the nature of the amplifier. The second objection is that this method wastes a good deal of energy as compared with the method which we shall describe later and this waste of energy has to expend itself somewhere and the easiest outlet is via the record. We have no hesitation, therefore, in rejecting this idea. Notwithstanding the statements of Mr. Barnett to the contrary, we still maintain, with all the emphasis we can command, that it is not possible to make a gramophone with an amplifier only three feet long respond acoustically to the full range of pitch which good reproduction requires. Such an amplifier with a 65 mm. sound-box does not give anything like a perfect scale balance.

There is another method of procedure which solves the difficulty to some extent, but even this method works best with a large amplifier. This is the Western Electric Company's method of regarding the sound-box and amplifier as analogous to an electric transmission line in which the impedances of the various sections can be matched. This is the principle adopted in the Orthophonic Victrola (when are H.M.V. going to introduce that instrument into this country, by the way?) and the patent rights for this country are held by the Gramophone Company. So far as we know, however, the principle has not yet been fully applied in any other instrument. Any reader who is interested in this method can find a fairly lucid description of it in Patent No. 230,876. We hope that in the future anyone who feels constrained to air his views on the subject of "matched impedances" will take the trouble to read that patent specification.

A further method of procedure to prevent record damage with a small amplification system is

suggested by the Lifebelt. The object in this method would be to absorb the lower frequencies mechanically. Unless this is done the needle will not track properly and the gramophone will not reproduce well even within the limits of the frequency range determined by its amplifier and its sound-box. We had an interesting illustration of this the other day when making a preliminary test (with fibre needles) on the "Constant Note" records which the Gramophone Company have so generously provided for our use. The tone of frequency 25 was not properly reproduced on any instrument. On our horn machines and on a large H.M.V. instrument we could hear it distinctly, but the volume was very weak and the whole sound-box shook. On smaller models with a rigid sound-box the needle simply refused to stay in the groove; the record threw the sound-box out and if we had been so foolish as to try the experiment with a steel needle the record would have been ruined. When, however, we used a Lifebelt, suitably stiffened with springs, the needle stayed in the groove even on the table models and a very faint note was discernible. The tuning of the Lifebelt itself for this purpose is, however, not a particularly easy matter, and unless it is adjusted properly it may quite easily do more harm than good. It seems reasonable to suppose that it is desirable to arrange for a flexible unit, preferably attached to the sound-box itself, of such quality that it will mechanically absorb vibrations from the lowest frequency recorded up to the point where the gramophone itself begins to deal with them acoustically. This naturally implies a sort of tapered flexibility, the most flexible portion being nearest the diaphragm and the stiffness increasing with the distance from the diaphragm. It also indicates that the smaller the gramophone the more difficult it will be to get the flexibility right, since it will have to cover a longer range. We are experimenting with a number of methods of achieving the object and will deal with them at the end of our detailed explanations upon the design and tuning of sound-boxes.

It has been necessary to clear the ground in this way before getting down to the details of our subject. Next month the order will be full steam ahead. In the meantime we strongly advise any reader who is suffering from excessive record wear to avoid heavy records and to use fibre needles only.

(To be continued.)



# TO PIANISTS—AND OTHERS

By F SHARP

*"Consider technical exercises as the daily physical exercise which is necessary to keep you in health."*

ROBERT SCHUMANN.

THERE is something ironic in this exhortation of Schumann's. The irony lies in the fact that the Master himself spoilt his technique by injudicious self-invented exercises. But the soundness of his advice is, naturally, beyond question.

This is the age of physical jerks. They can be practised at home with a hand-book in perfect safety. There are eye exercises, face drill, hair drill, fat drill, thin drill, and so on. Fat people can roll up and down their rooms with complete assurance that their antics will be rewarded. Thin people can—but I really don't know what thin people do. At any rate, for every defect there is someone who can be relied upon to suggest a remedy. An intimate knowledge of anatomy should, of course, be the basis of all physical exercises, and this applies in no small degree to the hand, with its delicate construction, its network of veins and nerves.

Circumstances over which no one has any control have made it almost impossible for me to touch the piano this winter. There are several reasons for this, the chief being that temporary lack of room has forced my instrument into a hopeless position. Closely pressed in the rear by a full-sized cabinet H.M.V. of the latest design: harassed on the right by a company of small but very active gramophones, it lies under the heavy fire of Balmain's Big Bertha, which has been trained directly on it since the September visit of the Expert Committee. The wireless reserves have also been brought up, but the piano had already capitulated before this totally unexpected reinforcement arrived.

I was discouraged about my fingers, because, though I do not play a great deal nowadays, I like to be able to when called upon without making a mess of it. To be able to forget about technique is as necessary as it is to be well-dressed in order not to feel conscious of one's clothes. I was trying to invent some exercises when I discovered the Cowling system. This proved to be exactly what I wanted. I wish I had known of it years ago. Good silent exercises that don't get on my nerves or any one else's. For the student, in whatever school he is studying, they must be a priceless boon. For professionals or amateurs, temporarily parted from their instruments (and the system is designed for violinists and 'cellists as well) the difficulty of keeping their hands in perfect con-

dition is solved. It can be done in the train, in the hotel, in bed, anywhere you like, in fact.

The system is based on scientific knowledge, and works out to a logical conclusion. Though some of the exercises are drastic, there should be no excuse for over-doing them and straining the hand, so clear are the instructions that go with them. A diagram of the hand assists the intelligence as to the why and wherefore of an exercise, and ten minutes to half an hour a day is all that need be given to it. I think everyone should do these exercises to keep his or her hands supple, and ward off possible rheumatism. I recommended some of them, the other day, to a sufferer from dead fingers. (Myself—LONDON EDITOR.) The effect on the circulation is remarkable.

I cannot enter into more details without divulging secrets, but I hope I have said enough to impress you with the advisability of having the Cowling system as a supplement to study, to avoid that worst drudgery of practice, the noisy reiteration of scales and exercises designed solely to keep the fingers supple. The time thus saved can be more interestingly spent in the pursuit of touch, rhythm and interpretation.

Thank you, Mr. Cowling.

## WILSON PANHARMONIC HORNS

(D. R. App. for)

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# TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS

## *The Expert Committee*

New readers may like to know that the Expert Committee which contributes the "Crede Experto" articles to THE GRAMOPHONE consists of half a dozen enthusiastic amateurs who were invited by the Editor to help us all with their collective advice and experience. They are all busy men, but they have all found time in the evenings, on Sundays, and on Saturday afternoons, to make experiments and to meet periodically for exchange of results and for the testing of machines and sound-boxes, etc., sent to the London office for their reports. They prefer to remain anonymous, and rightly, but their names would carry instant conviction to anyone who knew the gramophone world as to their ability in combination to give the best technical counsel obtainable anywhere at the present moment, and as to their absolute integrity and independence. We of THE GRAMOPHONE cannot thank them sufficiently for what they are doing for our readers.

## *The Wilson Horn*

Last summer Mr. P. Wilson designed a gramophone horn for the Expert Committee (see the Editor's article in the October number, pages 174, 175). After a good deal of subsequent experimenting, this horn, in two forms, has been placed in the hands of the Scientific Supply Stores, 126, Newington Causeway, London, S.E. 1, for manufacture. Model A.W. is for Balmain gramophones, model B.W. is for H.M.V. model No. 25. They are made in *papier-maché*, in various finishes—to suit the buyer's taste in decoration—and cost three guineas each (usual discount to the trade). It is hoped shortly to provide means for adapting the B.W. model to most types of cabinet and table models of gramophones at trifling cost. Those who are interested are advised to communicate with the makers. The Wilson Horn has been adopted by the Brixton and by the South London Gramophone Societies.

## *A Research Fund*

The royalties accruing from the sale of these horns will form the nucleus of a Research Fund which, at the special request of the members of the Expert Committee, will be kept by THE GRAMOPHONE and used as required. It is most important that it should be emphatically stated that no member of this Committee has ever made or will ever make a penny out of this commercial product. The Research Fund will benefit the trade in the long run, since all the results of experiments made by the committee are at the disposal of anyone who asks for them. A nominal fee is charged for advice in experimental work, which also goes to the Research Fund, and manufacturers or inventors are strongly recommended to submit their designs to the committee before the final stages are reached. They may rest assured that the strictest confidence is observed in these matters.

## *Extensions*

Where there is room to expand, everything connected with the gramophone trade seems to be overflowing into new buildings. The Apollo people last month; now the Gramophone Company is spending £200,000 and more on new plant at Hayes, so little do their factories in France, Spain, Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, Australia and India suffice to cope with the mango-tree growth of business; Edison Bell, Ltd., have opened some very central and attractive show-rooms at 169, Regent Street, and Imhof's will certainly explode if something is not done soon to relieve the pressure in New Oxford Street. Wherever one goes, at any rate in London, it is the same story of premises too small for the alarming growth of business. But what a sweet alarm it is!

## *The Missioner's Help*

To a reader, Col. the Rev. W. J. Phythian-Adams, D.S.O., M.C., who is going out to Madagascar as a missionary, we had much pleasure in sending a copy of the widely quoted story told by Mr. Kendall Gale, of the London Missionary Society, about the remarkable success of Harry Lauder records in changing the "discomforting suspicion" of the wild natives of Madagascar into "genial friendliness." Lauder had the same sort of effect in the native village at Wembley, it will be remembered. At any rate it is now pretty well established that his records are pre-eminently the music that hath charms.

## *De Lara Opera Fund*

The General Strike completely checked the autumn campaign which had been carefully prepared by Mr. de Lara and his energetic committees for raising money throughout the country towards the fund for establishing and endowing a National and Imperial Opera House in London. The whole subject has been thoroughly discussed in THE GRAMOPHONE, and we were entrusted by our readers with a number of subscriptions which we promised to hold safely till Mr. de Lara's scheme should be demonstrably either a success or a failure. Months have passed by and we have not been justified in handing the money over to Mr. de Lara; and, since the stewardship has become almost irksome, we have returned the subscriptions to the donors and asked them to keep the money for the present and to let us have it again later on. (If any reader who subscribed has not received his or her money back from us we shall be glad to be notified of the fact.)

Meanwhile the scheme itself is making headway, and in a shorter time than the sceptics suggest we may see it emerging into the public eye as something definitely achieved after years of labour and patience. At a committee meeting last month the auguries seemed to be very favourable, and we urge every reader who is not acquainted with the de Lara scheme to send to us for particulars.

## *Trade Directories*

The "Musical Directory" for 1927, published by Messrs. Rudall, Carte and Co., Ltd., 23, Berners Street, London, W. 1 (6s. net), is, in its seventy-fifth annual issue, a comprehensive guide to the professional and commercial world of music in the British Isles. Since player-pianos and gramophones are admitted on an equality with other musical instruments, the Directory is a very useful addition to the gramophile's reference library.

Similarly the gramophile will find the "Music Trades Diary, Directory, and Year Book" for 1927, published by Messrs. G. D. Ernest and Co., 5, Duke Street, London, W.C.2 (cloth, 2s. 6d.), easily the best diary that he can use. The year book (44 pages) is crammed with interesting matter and the directory (36 pages) is invaluable. The whole book is a great credit to our excellent contemporary, *The Music Trades Review*.

Who is going to give us a Gramophone Year Book?

## *A Graceful Gift*

One of our overseas readers, Mr. H. L. Wilson, of Hong Kong, not long ago presented no less than 300 records of fine music to fellow readers through the medium of THE GRAMOPHONE, and he has now presented the London office with a set of framed photographs of modern British composers—a very desirable set indeed.

These are the photographs, taken by that artist Herbert Lambert, of Bath, which were published a while ago in book form with an introduction by Eugene Goossens, and which may still be obtained separately or in the book from Messrs. J. Curwen and Sons, Ltd., 24, Berners Street, London, W. 1.

## *Golden Petmecky Needles*

These needles, on which the Expert Committee reported last month, are the vogue in the London office owing (partly) to a generous gift of 500 of them; and they were used at the N.G.S. demonstration at Murdochs Salon the other evening. Apart from their other excellencies they have the merit of being British made.

## *Reduction*

Messrs. J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., announce that the price of H. E. Piggott's "An Introduction to Music," reviewed in THE GRAMOPHONE last August (page 110), is reduced from 6s. to 3s. 6d. net.

## *Novels*

With the Editor's new novel, "Rogues and Vagabonds," being published serially in the *Sunday Chronicle* and the London Editor's new novel, "Flying Butterflies," just published in book form by Messrs. Philpot, the office boy is postponing the publication of his Frith-blowers' Anthem, "The More you're wanting something, the More we're Out of Stock," till the slack season.



### Our Contemporaries

"The British Musician," February; a valuable illustrated analysis of Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony* is very opportune. March; almost entirely devoted to Beethoven.

"The Phonograph Monthly Review" (Boston), February; an article on Smetana's music with useful list of records. Among other attractive features an extremely kind notice of the National Gramophonic Society for which we cannot be too grateful. Mr. W. S. Marsh's interesting article on "Musical Spain *via* Phonograph" is concluded. Captain H. T. Barnett contributes "British Chatter."

"The Sackbut," February; Gramophone Remarks by Ursula Greville, and a note, "Up the Gramophone!" by our London Editor.

*The Talking-machine World* (New York), December 15th; leading article on gramophone societies based on the example of our National Gramophonic Society.

### British Industries Fair

The White City is in the throes of this Fair and the Music Trades Section organised by the Federation of British Music Industries is the plum of the show. Most of our advertisers are well seen, and no omissions of the slightest importance can be easily detected. The gramophone world as we know it in England is presented, and we can only offer our heartiest congratulations to the Federation and to the trade for putting up such a creditable show and wish them commercial results beyond their most sanguine dreams.

## CONCERTS

BY the kindness of concert-givers themselves and of their agents (and especially thanks are due to Messrs. Lionel Powell and Holt, to Messrs. Ibbs and Tillett, and to the manager of the Wigmore Hall), our representative is able to hear a good deal of the music which is being performed from day to day in London. Sometimes he hears a favourite of the gramophone, John McCormack, Elena Gerhardt, Mischa Elman, the Lener Quartet; at other times he goes to hear Nadejin singing unrecorded Russian arias at the South Place Institute, or the Spencer Dyke Quartet playing the new McEwen *Quartet in E minor*, or the Music Society in new music by van Dieren, or Bach's *Chaconne* played by Thibaud; and at other times he listens to a performer not yet known to the gramophone public—Helen Henschel singing that wonderful series of French songs into the microphone at Savoy Hill or Ursula Greville delighting her audience at the Grotrian Hall with folk-songs; Segovia's thrilling mastery of the guitar, or the still beauty of the art of Madame Korchinska in the harp music of Bach, Mozart, Sem Dresden, Roussel, or André Caplet. Or again, he hears the orchestral concerts at the Albert Hall or the Queen's Hall or the Palladium; but not so often; for the orchestral programme is usually of music which having been learned is often played and generally has been recorded, whereas it is among singers and instrumentalists and the players of chamber music that novelties can mostly be noted as worthy of the recording room.

This is one thing, the watching for the new stars and the listening for the authentic messages. The rest is the relishing of the background which the gramophone has provided for the audience. One can almost recognise the gramophonists, as when, for instance, McCormack sang "To the Children" as an encore at the Albert Hall; they nodded their heads at the first bars of the accompaniment and told each other that Kreisler plays the obligato on the record. This is the public which is building up the audiences all over the country for the "International Celebrities" whom Messrs. Lionel Powell and Holt are enabling us to hear at subscription concerts in Belfast, Birmingham, Blackburn, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Dublin, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Hanley, Halifax, Leeds, Leicester, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Nottingham, Oxford, Plymouth, Reading, Sheffield and Stirling during this season; and can it be doubted that of the celebrities announced those who are already favourites with their record-owners will face the largest audiences—Kreisler, McCormack, Clara Butt, Friedman, Elman, the Leners, the Don Cossacks, the Cherniavsky Trio, Sir Thomas Beecham and the Symphony Orchestra, Selma D'Arco, Eric Marshall, and Jacques van Lier? By their recorded works shall ye know them.

### Dousona Demonstration

Demonstrations, especially in large carpeted rooms in hotels, are seldom gratifying to anyone. But the Dousona people invited the Press to the First Avenue Hotel the other day to hear the new model (12 guineas) and the combined wireless and gramophone model (three valves, 35 guineas). The Press was duly impressed, while our representative reflected that he had heard the Dousona perform twenty times as well under normal conditions. It was like house-hunting on a cold, wet winter day. The Dousona's performance was a fine tribute to its potentialities.

### Correspondence

The volume of correspondence which reaches the London Office is now so great that a certain ruthlessness in ignoring letters unaccompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope has become necessary. So long as the writers merely want to tell us something without expecting an acknowledgment or a reply, all is well. But let them not suspect us of discourtesy.

### An Appeal

If any of our readers or friends in the trade have spare records of good music, or humour, or dance tunes, they may be interested by an appeal from the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind, Carpenter Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham. There are 130 blind students, and though they have been presented with a fine gramophone they have no funds with which to refresh the small supply of records. All gifts of old records will be gratefully received and acknowledged by the General Superintendent and Secretary.

## NATIONAL GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY NOTES

(All communications should be addressed to The Secretary, N.G.S., 58, Frith Street, London, W.1.)

### Murdoch's

In spite of the short notice over two hundred members, or at least readers, turned up at Murdoch's Salons in Oxford Street on February 3rd at 7 p.m., and filled the room which had been cleared of pianos especially for our purposes. It was an informal gathering and, in the Editor's absence through illness, the London Editor (who is also the Secretary of the N.G.S.) introduced the new records, which were played on a Balmain gramophone with a long horn and an H.M.V. table model with the short Wilson horn alternately, under the care of Messrs. Balmain and Wilson. Golden Petmecky needles were used. The programme included records of music by Vaughan Williams, Purcell, Beethoven, Brahms and Schubert, followed by a few of the new orchestral records which are to be issued in April—the Corelli, Debussy, Peter Warlock, Delius, and the Mozart Symphony.

Considering that the conditions were not ideally suited to the appreciation of N.G.S. records—for instance, the Balmain badly placed, audience crowded, etc.—the meeting was a great success and the records were heard with pleasure. On another occasion of this kind the arrangements will be made with more discretion.

In the meanwhile, at the invitation of Messrs. Murdoch, represented by that friendly enthusiast Mr. A. T. Evans, a complete set of the Society's records which are available will be kept at 461, Oxford Street in a special room upstairs where on application to Mr. Evans any member of the Society may play them over at his or her leisure, or any reader of THE GRAMOPHONE may hear specimen records which will be demonstrated by one of Mr. Evans's assistants. Members can be enrolled, subscriptions paid, and orders for records received.

This arrangement should prove to be very useful to members who are not prepared to order blindly works which they do not know; and it is hoped that Murdoch's Salon may become a sort of rendez-vous for the Society.

### A Composer's Blessing

We are very grateful to Dr. Ralph Vaughan Williams for a letter in which he writes: "I consider the records of my *Fantasy Quintet* which you have kindly sent me to be very successful."



## Result of Organ Record Competition

IN January the Editor offered organ records to the value of a guinea for "the best explanation of this passion for organs, in not more than 200 words." He wanted to find out whether the majority of readers of THE GRAMOPHONE are buying organ records, "or whether the great, unreasoning public at large is creating this supply." The Editor's illness prevented him from judging the great number of answers received, but he read enough of them on his sick-bed to show him that the explanations were nearly all the same, and that it was almost impossible to select one answer as pre-eminently worthy of the prize. He was also amused to note how many writers begged that, if they were fortunate enough to win the competition, they might be given something else instead of organ records.

The conclusions, which are all fairly obvious, are as follows: (i) Electrical recording has made possible the rapid filling of a gap in record catalogues which has been felt for years. (ii) Bach and some other composers wrote splendid music which can only be recorded fitly on the organ. (iii) Religious associations and cinema associations make the organ popular. (iv) Many people regard the organ as the King of Instruments.

It follows that there will always be a fairly large public for good music and for church music on organ records, but that the novelty or stunt record will wane in popularity. It is not surprising to hear that most of our readers have bought one or two of the new records or that a mixed audience is always more impressed by the marvellous reproduction of the organ than by any of the other electrical recordings in a programme.

But does this wholly explain the "passion for organs"? Not one of the competitors mentioned the distinctive quality of the organ which a musical critic chose the other day in discussing the matter. Not variety or agility—not "the nearest thing to a full orchestra"—but simply *serenity*. On the organ, especially if electrically driven, you can play a tune with absolute evenness, unemotionally, or you can hold a chord at the maximum of length and sonority. Play the tune on another instrument and you will get all sorts of little variations of pressure which destroy serenity; put a sustained chord for horns in your orchestration, and you will be conscious of the physical strain on the players. From the lightest whisper to the full diapason the organ gives this unemotional serenity.

This is worth considering, and the prize is awarded to Mr. W. S. WILD, 51, Army Street, Clapham, S.W.4, because he has in the last sentence "indicated" this truth.

### *An explanation of the Passion for Organ Records.*

Being possessed of this passion, and being only an ordinary fellow, it can reasonably be assumed that one's own case, though necessarily egotistic, will be the best general explanation; though of course others may put their explanation in better form.

Early associations formed much of the basis for my taste for organ music. Only recently has there been a promise of that taste being adequately catered for, by the electric process. Sunday after Sunday at the Albert Hall, and Saturdays often at St. Margaret's, Westminster, Lemare's recitals, also frequently at the Brompton Oratory and St. Paul's Cathedral, I bathed appreciatively in both a sacred and secular flood of organ music. I never like comparisons of things unique; the varied glories of the terrestrial have increasingly appealed, but so also have the glories of the celestial persistently enraptured me. The majestic rumblings and riding on the storm, the soaring cadences, celestial choirs of angels, the musical immensity, the quivering poignancy, peaceful solace, the suggestion of eternity, these terms must serve so far as words can, to convey an idea of the intensity of that response of my phrenological faculties of "Sublimity," "Ideality," "Hope," and "Wonder," awakened by organ music. The "soul" in other music is beautiful, but of this earth, this life of tears and joys; organ music can supply the beatific vision, without which there would be to me a gap, a void, a loss.

WILLIAM S. WILD.

Thanks are due to *all* our readers who contributed their views, and especially to the following:—John Henley, Leslie M. Ward, Adam Black, S. P. Castell, Roland Seale, Kenneth R. Wood, E. H. Ronnebeck, A. W. Hammond, Cornelius Hey, Walter H. Scrivener, A. T. Newton, W. W. Hamer, J. C. W. Chapman, B. Bartram, and R. W. Brayne.

LONDON EDITOR.

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## NOTES AND QUERIES

[Each comment or question should be written clearly on a separate slip of paper and addressed to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, W.1, as early as possible in the month. Full name and address must in all cases be given for reference.]

(486) **'Cello Concertos.**—There are records of two movements of one of Haydn's in the Polydor cheap (2 m.) list, and there is a delicious Feuerman record of the *Adagio* and *Allegro* of the "D major Concerto" in the continental Parlophone catalogue (P.1298). Possibly the Polydor record is of the same music. Miss Beatrice Harrison should be asked to play a Haydn concerto for H.M.V. Those who have heard her know how good her Haydn is. The violoncello seems best suited for chamber concertos, and it has been well said that Elgar's concerto needs to be so regarded to be fully effective. Played, as it often is, after the finale of vigorous symphony, the delicate light scoring of the work is apt to fall a little flat.—H. W. C., Bristol.

(487) **Suggestions for Recording.**—H.M.V. are to be congratulated on their issue of the wonderful recordings of the Royal Opera House Orchestra at popular prices. May they get the support they deserve. I hope H.M.V. will see their way to include some of the following in their future recordings: Mendelssohn's "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage" and "Melusina Overture"; Schubert's "Overture to Fierrabras"; "King Lear Overture" (Berlioz); "Ballet Music from Henry VIII." (Saint-Saëns); Cherubini's "Anacreon Overture"; Holst's "Japanese Suite"; Bellini's "Norma Overture" and Raff's "In the Forest" symphony.—Nemo, High Wycombe.

(488) **Suggestions for Recording.**—To the list of recording suggestions I should like to add Mozart's "Pianoforte Concerto in A major" (K.488) and Dame Ethel Smyth's "Wreckers Overture." I heard both these works at the Bournemouth Winter Gardens last year, and greatly regret they are not yet available, at present, on records.—D. W. C., Salisbury.

(489) **Suggestions for Recording.**—Could anything be done to secure some recordings of the Russian Ecclesiastical music at Buckingham Palace Road? The voices are gorgeous and some remarkably beautiful things sung... It might also be worth while making a few records of the Byzantine music at Sant' Atanasio in Rome (in the via Babuino). As you know it is an Italo-Greek Church, but the music is Eastern.—H. R., Cromarty.

(490) **Schubert "Trio in B flat"**—H.M.V. played by Cortot, Thibaud and Casals. Why is side 3 and 6 on one record? Has this to be played in this order: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 4, 7, 8? Why has it been necessary to place them in this order, instead of numbering them consecutively?—H. H. S., Chatham.

[Surely the arrangement is explained clearly enough in the album! By putting the scherzo on the odd side of the allegro moderato each of the other two movements could be contained on one record complete. It was not necessary to do this, but it was highly sensible.—Ed.]

(491) **Edison Long-Playing Records.**—The U.S.A. papers are already advertising the Edison long-playing records twenty minutes each side, but no advertisement of anything of the sort has yet appeared in your paper. The U.S.A. seem ahead of Britain all the time in such matters... They have wonderful instruments, cheaper than we can get them, and they play on them, for the most part, utter trash.—H. B. R., Manouf, Egypt.

(492) **Best Records Wanted.**—Which are the two best records of (a) Giovanni Martinelli, (b) Titta Ruffo, (c) Mischa Elman, (d) Jan Kubelik?—W. J. L., Dublin.

(493) **The Panatrope.**—I believe that the reproduction of the future lies with electricity, and I know that others have been working towards this for years. But, in greeting the Panatrope one must not rush into unqualified praise of it or into hasty exaltation of it above the gramophone... It would be very interesting to hear the considered opinions of others who have given the Panatrope a full trial.—G. O. B., Camberley.

(494) **Suggestions for Recording.**—(a) "Tristan" Narration, viz., the whole of the tenor music in the third act; (b) "Boris Godounov," Song of the Innkeeper (contralto) sung by the child of the Czar with change of key in each verse; (c) "Tannhäuser," the whole of the Venus and Tannhäuser music in first

act; (d) "Rosenkavalier," the part of the Baron; (e) "Assumpta est Maria" (Führer) for soprano solo, quartet, and chorus, suitable for Westminster Choir to record, and divine music.—V. G. R., Birmingham.

(495) **Best Records Wanted.**—(a) Martinelli, (b) Sembrich, (c) De' Muro, (d) Journet, (e) Ruffo, (f) De Gogorza.—P. C. B., Hampstead.

(496) **Best Versions Wanted.**—(a) "Largo al Factotum," (b) "Cortigiani, vil razza dannata," (c) Jewel Song from "Faust," (d) Micaela's Aria from "Carmen."—P. C. B., Hampstead.



## ANSWERS TO QUERIES

[Answers must be written on separate slips and should be forwarded to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1, as early in the month as possible.]

(448) **Progress.**—I can back up J. A. G. L. regarding the pre-eminence of some old records. Here are four instances:—(i) "Kennst du das land?" (Mignon), sung by Claire Dux (Odeon), a pre-war record in my opinion superior to the Victor record of Emmy Destinn. (ii) "Two Grenadiers," sung by Titta Ruffo (at least six years old) beats Chaliapine's recent production. (iii) Prelude to Act III. of "Lohengrin," played by La Scala Orchestra and recorded pre-war by Fonotopia, is infinitely preferable to Albert Coates's H.M.V., B.937. I bought this record second-hand recently! (iv) Wotan's Farewell to Brünnhilde, sung by Michael Bohnen (Odeon, pre-war) is better than Clarence Whitehill (H.M.V.).—A. H. B., Jussulpore, India.

465 (a) **Fingal's Cave Overture.**—"D. W. C." in the January issue gives Col. L.1478 as best version. He can never have heard the Parlophone version, superior in both interpretation and recording.—C. B., Innerlathen, Peebleshire.

(471) **Suggestions for Recording.**—(a) and (b) have been recorded by Polydor. (d) is being done by the N.G.S. (c) and (e) should certainly be recorded.—H. G., New York.

(472) **Suggestions for Recording.**—Chopin's Ballades in A flat and G minor have been recorded by Victor and H.M.V. respectively. The second and third movements of Rachmaninoff's concerto have been recorded by Victor.—H. G., New York.

(475) **Best Versions Wanted.**—(a) I greatly prefer the Columbia record (3692) of Drdla's "Souvenir" with the same composer's "Serenade á Kubelik" on the reverse side to any other recording. The violin tone, playing and recording are splendid, and the price is moderate. (b) One of the best recordings of "One fine day" is H.M.V., D.898, from the complete set of "Madame Butterfly." I can also recommend Columbia (2621) by the same singer as a good one, if the first does not suit. (c) The recent Columbia record (L.1803) of the "Andante cantabile" is a splendid piece of playing and electric recording. If the old process is preferred H.M.V., D.866, by the Virtuoso Quartet, in spite of a slight scratch, is excellent. Either of the above recordings will be found entirely satisfactory.—D. W. C., Salisbury.

(477) **Versions Wanted.**—(b) The best rendering of Friedman's "Slavonic Rhapsody" is H.M.V., C.1042, by the Coldstream Guards. Although not quite complete a better one would be hard to find. On the reverse side is a similar piece called "The Queen's Royals." The recording of both pieces is splendid. (c) The new H.M.V. records (C.1298-9) of "Peer Gynt" contain the best recording of "Anitra's Dance." The above two records are the most adequate performances at present available of this popular suite.—D. W. C., Salisbury.

(478) **Best Records Wanted.**—(a) The best records of the late Gervase Elwes are the Columbia records (7363-5) of Vaughan-Williams' "On Wenlock Edge," with the London String Quartette. These records are perfect; I have enjoyed them again and again. (b) After many years of patient waiting we have eventually been rewarded by really adequate performances of the Chopin masterpieces. (b) The H.M.V. "Twenty-four Preludes," Op. 28, by Cortot (D.B.957-60), the de Pachmann (D.A.761), the Backhaus "Four Studies" (D.B. 928), the Hambourg "Ballade in G minor," Op. 23 (C.1290), and the Grainger "Sonata in B minor," Op. 58 (Col. L.1695-7) are all magnificent. My advice of the above is to



hear them all, and then decide, as they are all worthy of the highest praise. (c) Beethoven has not fared so well as Chopin by the new recording, but the "Waldstein Sonata" (H.M.V., D.960-2) by Lamond, although old process, is splendid. The "Moonlight Sonata" (Col. 9094-5), by Howard-Jones, is easily the best we have ever possessed, and far superior to the new Lamond (H.M.V., D1141-40). (d) Dealing now with the orchestra, the "Emperor Concerto" (H.M.V., D.625-9), the new Columbia "Ninth Symphony" (15775-82) or the H.M.V. (D.842-9) and the "Egmont Overture" (Col. L.1799), as stated above, are equally good, and are again a matter of personal hearing and opinion.—D. W. C., Salisbury. [H. G., New York, agrees about (a).—Ed.]

(478) (a) "On Wenlock Edge" (Col. 7363-5), "Phyllis has such charming graces," "Sigh no more, my ladies" (H.M.V., B.320). (b) "Sonata in B minor," Op. 58, Percy Grainger (Col. L.1695-7); "Mazurka in B flat minor," Op. 24, No. 4; "Mazurka in A flat major," Op. 50, No. 2, De Pachmann (H.M.V., D.B.861). (c) "Moonlight Sonata," Op. 27, No. 2, E. Howard-Jones (Col. 9094-5; "Concerto for Violin and Orchestra," Op. 61, Menges and R.A.H.O. (H.M.V., D.767-771); "Egmont Overture," R.A.H.O. (H.M.V., D.852); "Coriolan Overture" R.A.H.O. (H.M.V., D.690); "Symphony No. 5 in C minor," Op. 67, Sir Landon Ronald and R.A.H.O. (H.M.V., D.665-7); "Symphony No. 9, in D minor," Op. 125 ("Choral"), Albert Coates and Symphony Orchestra and Chorus (H.M.V., D.842-9).—T. A. M., Bayswater.

[H. S. M., Bow, E. 3., adds to (b) the Second Scherzo on H.M.V., D.1065, by Moiseivitch.—Ed.]

(479) **Best Versions Wanted.**—(b) The best Italian version of the "Prologue" to "Pagliacci" is undoubtedly H.M.V., D.B.464, by Titta Ruffo. In English, the Dinah Gilly (H.M.V., D.B.849) or the Peter Dawson (H.M.V., C.968 or C.1295), old and new recording, respectively, are thoroughly satisfactory. They are complete, but I believe (I have no score) there is a slight cut in the long orchestral introduction to each.—D. W. C., Salisbury.

(483) **Electrical Recordings and the "Jewel" Adaptor.**—For some time now I have been using the standard "Jewel" reproducer, fitted with a "Flex" diaphragm, or as an alternative an "Astra" No. 3 sound-box, when playing needle-cut records on the New Edison. I have never been troubled with either blasting or blaring even when playing the loudest of the new electrical recordings. The reproduction is excellent in every way, and the wear on records very small since the needle-track alignment can be adjusted to very near perfection. The reproduction is even better than on some of the new type gramophones, perhaps the design of the amplifier has something to do with that. I may add that even with the old "Nom-Y-Ka" diaphragm the reproduction was free from blast, but much softer. With the "Astra" sound-box and a moderately loud needle the reproduction is loud enough for anyone, and far too noisy for the majority of listeners. If an "Astra" box is used it requires about a quarter of an inch cutting off the tone-arm fitting to allow free play on the ball socket of the adaptor. I wonder if "W. J. W. H." has tried having the sound-box tuned?—R. H. B., Blackpool.

(483) I gave up the use of the adaptor on my Edison phonograph, as I came to the conclusion it was hopeless, and assembled a new gramophone. It has since occurred to me that I could cut the tone-arm horn at about the level of the turntable and make a fitting to which either a tone-arm such as the Apollo or the cut-off part of the Edison could be attached at will. When playing with the new tone-arm the rack would be thrown out of gear and the horn rotated into a position in which the distance from the centre of the turntable was correct.—H. H. M., Liverpool.

(485) **Flora Woodman.**—I do not think Flora Woodman has the following now that she did before the war; certainly her voice seems to have not the freshness that was apparent in her first records. Two records by Francis Russell will be found in the Columbia January list No. 4158. Joseph Farrington recorded before the war, I forget for whom, and is still a fine artist, although not yet in any list. William Boland has recorded, for Pathé, I think, but Dorothy Silk, I understand, has been found unrecordable both under the old system and the electrical owing to some vagary in her voice. I have no doubt several other names could be added to your correspondent's list; for instance, Frederick Kelsey, who broadcast recently a series of Schubert's songs sung in German, which would make a welcome change here to the eternal feminine by which medium we seem doomed to hear Schubert on records—even the "Erl King" is viciously snatched from our basses, to say nothing of "Who is Sylvia?" from our tenors.—S. F. D. H., Brixton.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### *De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.*

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 58, Frith Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

### WAGNER RECORDS.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—My two last articles on Wagner have brought me correspondence from various sources. May I offer my sincere thanks to the writers? One of the letters, that from Mr. Robey, I understand you are printing in full. His list is most valuable, and the numerous Odeon records will probably be new to others besides myself. I think he is optimistic in asking for a complete *Tristan*, but I wish him luck.

The information from other letters I must summarise. Mr. W. G. Hennesy, of Liverpool, has put me on to the *Faust Overture*, Polydor 65955-6 (Bruno Walter and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra), and Mr. Henry S. Gerstlé, of New York City, speaks of "the old Hertz record of the Transformation Music from the last act of *Parsifal*," though he gives no further details.

Mr. J. L. Royden, of Oxford, points out that in my last article I did not refer to the vocal record of *Abendlich strahlt* (*Rhinegold*), Parlophone E.10422 (Robert Burg). He also suggests that the following should be recorded:—*Rhinegold: Immer ist undank Loge's Lohn; Valkyrie: Friedmund darf ich nicht heissen* (Act I.), *So ist es denn aus* (Fricka in Act II.); and he wants a selection from Act II., scenes 4 and 5, though exactly what this is I cannot quite make out from his letter. He also, I am glad to see, supports my request for the Rhinemaidens' Scene (*Götterdämmerung*, Act III).

Finally I must apologise to all readers for the careless omission in my February article of any record of *O Star of Eve* (Mr. Robey points this out). Those who have read my previous articles will know that I have given my vote to Battistini's Italian version (H.M.V., D.B.194), although those who want the song in German may prefer Polydor 65598 (Schorr).

Yours faithfully,

P. LATHAM.

London.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—Here are some additions to the Wagnerian record library given by Mr. Peter Latham in this month's GRAMOPHONE; it does not pretend to be an exhaustive supplement, but it may be useful:—

#### "RIENZI."

1. *Uprouse ye! Romans.* Polydor 14167.
2. *March of the Warriors.* Parlophone E.10147.
3. *Gesang des Friedensboten.* Odeon O.5016.

#### "DER FLIEGENDE HOLLÄNDER."

1. Duet, Daland-Dutchman, Act I. (in two parts). Polydor 65632.
2. Duet, Senta-Erik, *Fühlst du den Schmerz.* Polydor 65704.
3. Daland's Aria, *Mogst du mein Kind.* Vox 3126.
4. Introduction to Act III. and Sailors' Chorus. Parlophone E.10124.
5. Sailors' Chorus (vocal). Odeon UX.52593.
6. Duet, Erik-Senta, *Was musst ich horen?* Odeon AA.79011.
7. Erik's Cavatina, *Willst jenes Tages.* Polydor 66135.
8. *Verloren!* Odeon UX.52609.
9. Dutchman's Farewell, *Erfahre das Geschick.* Odeon UX.25941.

#### "TANNHÄUSER."

(Act II., complete on Odeon (ten discs)).

1. *Der Brannen der uns Wolfram nannte.* Polydor 14668.
2. *Wohl wusst ich hier sie im Gebet zu finden.* Polydor 20305.
3. Elizabeth's Prayer (uncut). Polydor 62348.
4. *Lied an den Abendstern.* Any catalogue.
5. *As I awoke* (continuation of the Pilgrimage). Polydor 65814.
6. *Schlusschor* (Finale of opera). Odeon O.5028.



"LOHENGRIN."

1. Telramund's Address, Act I., *Dank König, Dir.* Polydor 72966.
2. Duet, Elsa-Lohengrin, Act I., *Wenn ich im Kampfe für dich siege.* Odeon UX.51613.
3. Duet, Elsa-Ortrud (Act II.), *Du Armste kannst.* Polydor 78543.
4. *O König, trugbetörte Fürstin* (Act II.). Polydor 72966 (supra).
5. Bridal Scene, complete on five discs. Odeon.
6. Introduction to Act IV. Odeon 311603.
7. Elsa's Gebet, *Du trugest zu ihm.* Odeon UX.51613 (supra).
8. *Gott grüß euch liebe Männer von Brabant* (Act I.). Odeon O.6130.

"TRISTAN UND ISOLDE."

1. *Muss ich dich so versteh'n* (Act III). Polydor 66139.

"DAS RHEINGOLD."

1. *Immer ist undank Loge's Lohn.* Polydor 15849.
2. *Über Stock und Stein.* Polydor 15849.
3. Wotan's Greeting, *Abendlich Strahl.* H.M.V., D.809.

"DIE WALKÜRE."

1. *Friedmund darf ich nicht heissen* } Odeon RXX.80093.
2. *Aus dem Wald trieben mich fort* } Polydor 72867 (Part 1).
3. Wotan's Narration (Act II), in two parts. Odeon O.6156.
4. Brunnhilde foretells Siegmund's death (two parts). Polydor 72986.
5. *War es so schmählich?* Polydor 72978.
6. Orchestral portion of Wotan's farewell (not included in Whitehill records). H.M.V., D.1079.

"SIEGFRIED."

1. Duet, Siegfried-Mime (Act II.), *Wir sind zur Stelle.*, in two parts. Polydor 61844.
2. Duet, Siegfried-Mime (Act II.), *Er sinnt und er Wägt*, in two parts (a continuation of Mime's treachery). Polydor 65462.
3. Erda (Act III.), *Stark ruft das Lied* (piano accompaniment). Odeon, UX.51628.

"GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG."

1. Entrance of Gunther (Act II). Odeon UX51413.

The complete Act II. of "Tannhäuser" is quite well sung, but in my opinion the orchestral accompaniment is poor; the same remarks apply to the Bridal Chamber scene from "Lohengrin." Destinn sings Elsa in the latter.

Some of the records I have given overlap, but this is unavoidable, since I gather that the idea is to give a list of as much as possible of the printed score which is recorded.

I heartily endorse Mr. Latham's request for more Wagner. I will be even bolder. What about a complete recording of "Tristan und Isolde" (sung in German)? An expensive item, no doubt, but a very acceptable one. Instead of giving us extracts like *Tannhäuser Overture* or *Prelude to Act III of "Lohengrin," ad nauseam*, let the recording companies turn their attention to the hitherto unrecorded portions of Wagner's scores as Mr. Latham so wisely suggests in his article.

Wagner has such a solid hold on the public of to-day that there should be little fear of originality not harmonising with profit.

Yours truly,

London, W.8.

EDWARD ROBEY.

SIR,—In the course of his long article in the February number Mr. Latham—determined to leave no stone unturned—asks for yet further information as to Wagner records. Mme. Makushina's records for V.F. are, I can assure him, in some cases preferable to the renderings he suggests. The following are worthy of his attention: (1) V.F. 661-2: Closing scene, *Götterdämmerung*. (2) V.F.670-1: Isolde's Narration and Brangäne's Reply. (3) V.F.630: Elizabeth's Prayer, *Tannhäuser*, and *Liebestod, Tristan*. The same company have just issued the *Fire Music Scene* from *The Valkyrie*, with Mr. Norman Williams as Wotan.

Yours faithfully,

Bristol.

H. W. CRUNDELL.

THE N.G.S. MEETING.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

DEAR SIR,—A surfeit of trade demonstrations, society meetings, and advance copies of this and that "landmark" in the recording art, over a period of years, has made me naturally sceptical of "new" records and "new" gramophone parts.

Despite the admittedly bad acoustic conditions under which your N.G.S. demonstration was made, I must admit that my scepticism was turned to enthusiasm in the first half hour and I have been trying to analyse the reason why! It's this—your N.G.S. electrically done records are the best of their class I have heard (the 'cello was positively thrilling, that deep vibrance without the metallic edge), and there is just enough of the connoisseur's instinct in me to appreciate that when I am a member, as I intend to become, my every record will be something *exclusive* because of the limited edition, and the unusual musicianship that goes to their making.

If there is a reader of your excellent paper who would not treasure a Shakespeare first folio or an original score of a Beethoven quartet, I shouldn't ask him to join the N.G.S. All the others ought to. My respects, too, to Mr. Wilson's most excellent trumpet!

Yours faithfully,

London, S.W.

B. W. RAYNE.

MISREPRESENTED.

(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. Lionel Gilman, has rushed to support my argument. My open letter in your January issue told of the howl that goes up when the gadget gentlemen are challenged; but I did not expect misrepresentation. In journalism we do not offer "gratuitous impertinence" to fellow contributors; it simply is not done. Mr. Gilman had better read my open letter again and notice that I testify to the debt that the gramophonist owes to scientific research. Obviously Mr. Gilman feels that this could not have been meant for him, and, to quote his own charming words, he is perhaps "conscious of the precariousness of his own reputation and the shallowness of his own knowledge." He attempts to create a breach between fellow contributors and myself, which I feel sure the former will reject as indignantly as I do. He doubts my attainments and credentials. Naturally, because far from "devoting hours of valuable time and energy," etc., I use the whole of my quite normal time and energy in musical criticism and news service. Like most musicians, I have little leisure or need for attempting to "improve" on the musical reproduction of first-class makes of gramophones. I like to believe that the manufacturers know their business as I know mine.

Mr. Gilman is hard on the cultured music lover when he says that the latter cannot decide whether a bad performance is due to the playing, recording, or merely to a cracked diaphragm. The music lover, "ignorant of gramophone technique," knows just what is beyond Mr. Gilman's comprehension, and this is that all the devoted hours of valuable time and energy in the world will not improve a record offering poor interpretation or playing. Mr. Gilman speaks personally of the intermittent trickle from my pen. This is hard on my assistant and myself, who too frequently find that we are not keeping up with the demands of editors, agencies, and printers. But then we have to realise that even though we enthusiastically edit two English and one foreign gramophone features, the gramophone is not the centre of the musical universe, and we know nothing of Mr. Gilman's own "attainments and credentials" either as pseudo-musician or pseudo-scientist.

However, with or without Mr. Gilman's permission and despite the "devoted hours," etc., etc., my earnest hope is that the gramophone will escape the fiendish activities of the breed of technical amateurs who are at the moment sucking the art out of radio. Imagine THE GRAMOPHONE corresponding to any wireless journal, with hardly a single advertiser concerned with a musical product, and scores of gadgets shrieking that term fatal to art—"better results." Half an hour of the time of a real scientist like Mr. P. Wilson is worth all the humbug talk of devoted hours and energy, and the issues of the N.G.S. are worth all the ill-informed musical criticisms of existing records.

Yours truly,

London.

J. F. PORTE.



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AGENTS WANTED



# THE FORUM

The following articles are unsolicited contributions from readers, dealing with this or that aspect of the gramophone to which each has given thought. A selection from the MSS. received is published every month, and prizes are offered every quarter. Articles should not exceed 1,500 words, and should be typewritten or written **very** legibly on one side only of the paper. They should be sent to THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London, W. 1, marked "The Forum": and a stamped and addressed envelope should be enclosed.



## FOLK-SONGS OF THE SEA

### Shanties on the Gramophone

By LLEWELYN C. LLOYD

**A**MONG the idiosyncrasies of recording companies perhaps the most prominent is their fondness for the game of "Follow my leader." All good gramophonists study the catalogues (and THE GRAMOPHONE), and they must have noticed that when, say, in May, Company A, with a great flourish of trumpets and beating of drums, brings out a set of records of somebody's umpteenth symphony in June or July Company B hastens, with if possible even greater *éclat*, to issue another recording of the same work. This, I suppose, is all part of the competitive game, but when one thinks of all the fine music which is left unrecorded, it leads to tearing of the hair. Lately, sea-shanties have been coming from all the companies, and everybody is playing them and singing them when probably a few months ago they had never heard one of these folk-songs of the sea. One does not object to the plentiful issue of these songs, however, for they have delightful tunes, and tunes are badly needed in this tuneless age.

But this popularity of the sea-shanty has its attendant dangers. The chief is that it should be taken up in "arty" circles and turned into something highbrow and "precious"; that would be a first-rate disaster. The shanty is too fine and too healthy a thing to be sung by out-size tenors for the delectation of sentimental flappers, or to be used as a medium for the display of their voices by "celebrity" *prime donne*. The shanty is altogether too jolly and too hearty a thing to become the property of any cult. Let it be sung in the streets, in the morning bath, and at convivial gatherings when it is desired to let off steam; but let it be kept away from the recital and the highbrow *salon*.

In playing over sea-shanties for my friends I have found that most of them have only the vaguest idea of what they really are, so it may be worth while to say something about them. They date from the old sailing-ship days, when there were tasks to be done—such as hauling up the anchor and reefing sails—which called for the monotonous repetition of a few movements by gangs of men. Unanimity of movement was essential, and it was soon found that a song was the best method of securing this, a haul on the rope or a turn of the capstan synchronising with the strong beat in the rhythm of the song. One sailor (the shantyman), selected for his ability to improvise words to suit known tunes, acted as soloist, standing aloof from the toil, while the others joined in the chorus as they worked. Anything would serve as a shanty, provided that it had a well-marked rhythm and a chorus, and we find folk-songs from the countryside, negro tunes from the cotton-fields of America, and genuine sailors' tunes, all classed together as shanties. The words rarely

form any connected story, the shantyman improvising to the best of his ability as he went along, and (it must be confessed) the words of the verses were not always meet for the delicate ear. The choruses, however, which could be heard at a much greater distance than the verses, were almost invariably quite innocuous. There was a much greater variety of words than of tunes. Nearly every shantyman had his own version of the words, but the tunes varied to only a limited extent. A few tunes—such as "Shenandoah" and "Billy Boy"—were universally known, and the variants of text were consequently numerous. Some tunes, such as "The Drunken Sailor," "Haul away, Joe," and "The hog's-eye man," are modal, and this gives them a peculiar strength and vitality.

Such was the shanty. Now let us see how it has been treated for the gramophone. To my knowledge shanties have been recorded by five British companies—H.M.V., Vocalion, Parlophone, Edison Bell, and Aco.

In their records of songs from the "Week-End Book" by John Goss and the Cathedral Singers, the Gramophone Company included one (B.1999) devoted to sea-shanties, and this remains one of the best shanty records. John Goss sings with delightful humour, and he is supported by an excellent male quartet. The three shanties on this record—*Billy Boy*, *Rio Grande*, and *Shenandoah*—are probably the three best-known, and all are well worth knowing. *Shenandoah* has one of the most beautiful melodies in all music. Since this record appeared I believe that H.M.V. have issued some further shanty records, by Harry Dearth, but these I do not know.

Vocalion have economised space by getting eight shanties on two ten-inch records, but one result of this arrangement is that only a couple of verses of each can be given; on the other hand, there is the obvious advantage which will at once appeal to those to whom expense is an important consideration. The singers are John Buckley and a chorus, and apart from a rather "arty" flavour their performance is quite satisfactory. "Rio Grande" is rather spoiled by its persistent mispronunciation as "Reeo." The shanties recorded by this company are: *Tom's gone to Hilo*, *Billy Boy*, *Rio Grande*, and *Blow the man down* (X.9786); and *Shenandoah*, *Johnny come down to Hilo*, *A long time ago*, and *Fire down below* (X.9787). The last two have been recorded only on this disc, and it is worth getting for them alone.

Parlophone have devoted three ten-inch records to sea-shanties, the singers being Kenneth Ellis and a male quartet, while the accompaniment is provided by a string quartet and flute, which proves a pleasant change from the usual



pianoforte. The singers give a good all-round performance, but their intonation is a little doubtful at times in *Shenandoah*, although this may be the fault of the recording. The first record (E.5583) contains *Amsterdam* (also known as *A-roving*) and *Shenandoah*; the second (E.5584) has *The Drunken Sailor*, *Santy Anna* and *Lowlands Away* (the last two fine tunes, not elsewhere recorded); and the third (E.5585) has *Rio Grande*, *Reuben Ranzo*, *Blow the man down*, and *Johnny come down to Hilo*.

Robert Carr and the Seafarers, who sing shanties for the Edison Bell company, impart a welcome touch of vigour to their renderings, which is unfortunately somewhat rare in other recordings. This feature of their singing is particularly notable in *What shall we do with the drunken sailor?* which is paired with the amusing *Whisky Johnny* (V.F. 1164). I count this one of the best shanty records I know. Other shanties recorded by these singers are: *Billy Boy*, *Blow the man down*, and *Shenandoah* (V.F.1159); and *Rio Grande*, and *Johnny come down to Hilo*, (V.F.1163).

The Aco records are made by John Thorne and a male trio, who sing *Haul away Joe*, *Rio Grande*, *Shenandoah*, and *Billy Boy* (G.15824); and *The shantyman's song*, *Can't you dance the polka?*, *The Drunken Sailor*, and *Johnny come down to Hilo* (G.15870). Their performance is very good, although it would be still better if it were a little more vigorous, and they also mispronounce "Rio" as "Reeo." They are at their best in *Can't you dance the Polka?*—a delightful shanty not elsewhere recorded. The Aco record is also the only one of that fine modal tune, *Haul away Joe*, but it is accompanied by three of the best-known of all shanties, which are,

I think, better sung by John Goss and the Cathedral Singers. The anonymous accompanist adds a great deal to the effectiveness of these recordings.

Perhaps I may indicate what I consider are the best five records of sea-shanties, but this list is to be taken only as showing my personal preference. If you want to buy sea-shanties, the best thing to do is to try them all over at your dealer's, and pick out those you like best. It is impossible to avoid duplication in such a list, but in selecting these five records I have tried to reduce it to a minimum. It will be seen that *The Drunken Sailor* appears three times and *Shenandoah* and *Johnny come down to Hilo* appear twice each. Here is the list:

H.M.V., B.1999: John Goss and the Cathedral Singers, *Rio Grande*, *Billy Boy*, and *Shenandoah*.

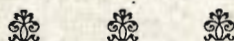
Vocalion X.9787: John Buckley and chorus, *Shenandoah*, *Johnny come down to Hilo*, *A long time ago*, and *Fire down below*.

Edison Bell V.F.1164: Robert Carr and the Seafarers, *The Drunken Sailor* and *Whisky Johnny*.

Parlophone E.5584: Kenneth Ellis and chorus, *The Drunken Sailor*, *Santy Anna*, and *Lowlands Away*.

Aco G.15870: John Thorne and male trio, *The Shantyman's Song*, *Can't you dance the polka?*, *The Drunken Sailor*, and *Johnny come down to Hilo*.

This gives twelve different shanties, and they should be enough to give anyone a good idea of the charm of these folk-songs of the sea.



## BILL ADAMS

By "INDICATOR"

I THINK it is now universally admitted that Bill Adams won the Battle of Waterloo. The confounded difficulty that has since arisen is: which Bill Adams? Not only does this old soldier "never die," but instead of "fading away" he pops up all over the place. To count him, or locate him—well! It's the deuce to find where he isn't. I have known chaps fairly startled at suddenly finding they themselves are "him." "B.A." after a person's name nearly always means Bill Adams. You have only to know a man long enough, when, in the course of conversation you will gasp "Good heavens! Bill Adams!" He will be struck the same in regard to you, no doubt. So Hail "Ubique Bill," Hail to thee, thou son of old Adam!

Now let me see—when did I first meet Bill in the gramophone world? Ah, yes. I remember. It was in a dingy chapel building off Camberwell New Road, at a society meeting. I sat well to the back of the hall, being a non-member, listening to a gramophone and a phonograph; there glided to my side a tall, cadaverous individual, with a voice like the prophet Ezekiel at a seance: "It's all wrong; no scientific knowledge; totally unscientific short tone-arm, short horns," etc. I listened with awe, and finally asked what machine he used. "Oh, a tone-arm three feet long and a horn seven feet or more." Might I come and hear it? "Well, he lived in the country," and when he told me his machine was housed in a hut, in the middle of a field or garden, I said "Yes, I suppose so," and gave up the idea.

Years after I met another man who invited me to his home—a veritable museum of gramophones, phonographs,

hundreds of blue amberols, thousands of gramophone records, cupboards full of sound-boxes; he showed me a sound-box with a long bar tensioning, something unique, yet I was to learn later that long bar tensioning was old. I have since met other Bill Adams's with long bar tensioning variations galore, all different, all new, yet all old. Think of the Bill Adams diaphragms, the B.A. Harry Lauder tone-arms, the B.A. improved Grams with bifurcated entrails, the B.A. gas stove fitments that suggest "one place," and the harp-wire fitments that suggest the "other place." Then there is the mathematical Bill Adams of needle-track alignment infamy, and so on *ad infinitum*. Is there no cure? No! Emphatically no! But there is a beautiful buster of B.A.'s about. A phlegmatic, solid little man that I keep knocking up against at different times and different places; he calmly looks at anything gramophonic, then looks up over Bill Adams's head with something seraphic, past-searching, yet cherubically innocent, in his eyes, and says: "Yes, this was patented in 1814 by a man named Smith, improved in 1900 by Jones, and brought out by Robinsons in 1912." Another Bill Adams busted! Yet, talk about reincarnation! Why Bill Adams has made it a quick-change business. When I think how history is being made, when I see the Bill Adams's coming along fast and thick on, say, the Doped Fibre tradition, well, it's a great comfort to know there is always the little fat man (they are always fat), quietly and steadily busting, busting, busting with historical facts about who really won the Battle of Waterloo.

"INDICATOR."



# NEGLECTED WORKS AND OTHER MATTERS

By ERIC H. THIMAN, Mus. Bac.

IT may seem the starkest of ingratitude to grumble at the recording companies' lack of enterprise with regard to their classical music. Nevertheless, in spite of the steadily increasing output of records of good music, such a lack of enterprise does undoubtedly exist. It has been interesting to compile a list of works which should have been recorded long ere this, and such a list, or rather part of one, appears below. I say part of one, for a complete list of neglected masterpieces would fill many more columns than practicable. But before coming to this point let me mention briefly one or two other grumbles I have long had in mind.

1. *Unnecessary Duplication*.—One of the most amazing features of recording of classical music is the manner in which the same works continually reappear in the various companies' lists. Instances will be known to everybody, but let me mention one or two. The Bach *D minor Concerto* for two violins appears as a celebrity record (8s. 6d.) in the H.M.V. catalogue. Admittedly this is beyond the pockets of many. Columbia later produce a version of this work which sells at 6s. 6d. On top of this the Vocalion records appear, which sell at 5s. 6d. Now, it cannot be conceived that people who have the H.M.V. or Columbia sets will wish to buy the Vocalion sets, and it is fairly safe to say that music-lovers who were determined to buy this fine work have already bought either of the first two versions. Why, then, must the third company bring out these records at only 1s. less than the Columbia when there are other two-violin works as yet unrecorded? What about the *C minor Concerto* by Bach, or the concerto by Mozart for the same instruments, or the numbers of sonatas and concerti for two violins by Handel, Purcell, Corelli, and others? Another instance. There are no less than five versions of the *Siegfried Idyll*—one by H.M.V. (6s. 6d.), two by Columbia (6s. 6d.), one by Vocalion (4s. 6d.), and one by Velvet Face (4s.), not to speak of many continental recordings. This unnecessary reduplication hardly needs comment, except for the amazing fact of there being two different versions in one catalogue. I have heard it said that there is nearly always a loss on the production of records of good music. If this is actually so this conduct seems more incomprehensible still. Can the companies afford to throw away money to this extent?

2. *Long Works on Too Many Discs*.—One of the most maddening things about the records of long works is the changing of sides during a movement. This is bad enough in itself, but when it could be avoided by the better filling up of sides it is utterly inexcusable. Delightful as the Parlophone records of *Till Eulenspiegel* are, for instance, they are so badly filled up that they spread over four sides. With a little more care the work could have been got on to one disc. One realises that the company could not afford to sell this work complete for 4s. 6d., but why not call it a celebrity and sell the one disc for 8s. or 9s.? It is unthinkable that people will buy some parts only of a long one-movement work, and I cannot believe that there is anyone who would regret spending 9s. to get the work on one record instead of two records at 4s. 6d. each and the consequent trouble and bother of having to make three changes during the piece. I do not hesitate to say that this changing of records is, perhaps, the greatest bar to the sale of long works which yet exists. The companies should make every effort to reduce the number of discs, even if it means an increased price. Cannot the recording run further on to the centre of the records? Cannot records be made 12½ inches in diameter? (This would fit most instruments.) Is not some system possible whereby the actual speed of the disc when recorded could be made

slower, thus getting more music on to each record? I cannot think any of these problems are insuperable.

3. *Lack of Enterprise in the Choice of Works*.—This applies particularly to chamber music. There are surely quite enough string quartets by classical composers already recorded. Why cannot we have more works with wind instruments and unusual combinations? For instance, Mozart's *Oboe Quartet* (which exists only on N.G.S. records), clarinet, and other quintets, Handel's trios for flute, oboe, and harpsichord, Bach's six sonatas for flute, containing some of the best music he ever wrote, his sonatas for violin and flute; Mozart's divertimenti for wind; the same composer's Horn Concerto; Purcell's sonatas for two, three, four violins, 'celli, and harpsichord; and trios by Arne and other old English composers. Modern works for unusual combinations are also rare to meet on records. Why is the best chamber music of Grainger, such as his delightful "My robin is to the Greenwood gone," "Green Bushes" and "Walking Tune" unrecorded? In orchestral music there is a host of small and complete works which can be got on to one side of a record, such as pieces by Ernest Farrar, Delius ("Summer Night on the River," "North Country Sketches") Butterworth ("Two Idylls"), and scores of pieces by Russian and French composers too numerous to mention.

4. *Neglected Works*.—It is surely nowadays unnecessary to plead the cause of Bach. Yet so far as the gramophone is concerned he is one of the most neglected of composers. Why is only one of the superb *Brandenburg Concerti* (No. 3) recorded? Why is the fascinating No. 2, for trumpet, violin, flute, oboe, and strings, and the charming No. 4, for violin and flutes, with its superb fugue, unrecorded? Then of the delightful orchestral suites—only one (No. 2) is recorded, and that none too well. (The so-called *Suite No. 6* is a hybrid, collected and orchestrated from various piano works.) The Oxford University Press are just publishing a series of symphonies and orchestral movements from the cantatas and other works. These are all for small orchestra, and contain some delightful and quite unknown music, and it is to be hoped that we shall soon have records of them. Handel's *Concerti Grossi* are similarly unrecorded. I will not draw out this paragraph longer, though it would be easy to do so, and I will content myself by giving, in conclusion, a list of works which many, if not most, musicians would delight to have, and which would be likely to have a ready sale.

1. Bach. *Brandenburg Concerti* (1, 2, 4): Chamber music (see above), orchestral suites, movements from cantatas.
2. Delius. See above.
3. Dohnanyi. Variations on a Nursery Song (piano and orchestra).
4. Grainger. See above.
5. Grieg. Concert Overture, Holberg Suite, short orchestral pieces.
6. Handel. Trios, Concerti Grossi.
7. Holbrooke. Variations on "Auld Lang Syne," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," "Three Blind Mice" might also be re-recorded.
8. Ireland. "The Forgotten Rite."
9. Jongen. Tableaux Pittoresques for small orchestra, string quartets, and serenades. (Jongen's music is always charming and delightful, and none of it appears to be recorded.)
10. Mozart. Works for wind instruments (quintets, divertimenti, serenades).
11. Purcell. Chamber music.



12. Rachmaninoff. Piano Concerto in C Minor.
13. Cyril Scott. Two Passacaglias.
14. Smetana. "My Country" (five symphonic Poems).

15. Strauss. Serenade for wind instruments.
16. Vaughan Williams. Norfolk Rhapsodies (orchestra).
17. Wolf. Italian Serenade.

ERIC H. THIMAN.



## A PLEA FOR MORE MENDELSSOHN

By H. H. E.

THE persuasive "Plea for More Handel" in The Forum for last March emboldens me to raise a feeble voice in petition for more Mendelssohn. Both Handel and Mendelssohn are suffering for their overwhelming predominance in Victorian days. The present age—in common, I suppose, with most previous ages—loves to flatter its own accomplishments by disparaging those of the age immediately preceding it. And the mere fact that our grandfathers placed these two composers on pinnacles somewhat higher perhaps than was strictly their due is quite sufficient to account for the determination of their descendants to dislodge them. The sooner the pieces are picked up, dusted, and restored to their proper positions the better for the cause of musical sanity.

Not, of course, that Mendelssohn—any more than Handel—has ever lost his hold on the great mass of ordinary music-lovers, who, after all, are the final arbiters in the matter. Presumably every house that contains a piano contains also a copy of the *Songs without Words*, a fact which may or may not help to a just appreciation of the composer's merits. Certainly the *Elijah* holds a prominent place in the repertory of every choral society, and never fails to draw an audience by virtue of its dramatic force, its picturesque variety, and its devotional impressiveness. What violinist of any pretensions neglects the concerto, so admirably adapted to exhibit the varied resources of the instrument? And what organist, with a soul above the ordinary church voluntary or operatic transcription, does not honour the six magnificent sonatas, as well as the three preludes and fugues, which alone survive to remind us of the composer's skill on the king of instruments? Frequenters of orchestral concerts are perfectly familiar with such popular items as the *Hebrides* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* overtures, and the Italian and Scotch symphonies still hold their own. Remembering that Mendelssohn died as long ago as 1847, one may be permitted to wonder how many works of modern composers will occupy a similar place in general esteem eighty years hence!

This being so, it is not unamusing to observe the tone of patronising contempt adopted towards this master in some musical circles to-day. For instance, a well-known American critic, with a forcibly picturesque pen, is fond of alluding to "the finicking Felix," while a quite recent English writer contrasts the "mere prettiness" of his style with the solid work of Schumann. I hold no brief for Mendelssohn against any other great composer, and am perfectly prepared to burn incense before the shrine of Schumann, but I do plead that "finicking" and "mere prettiness" are unworthy terms to apply to the great mass of the Mendelssohnian output, or to the work of a man who exercised so enormous an influence on his generation, and is in the main so excellent an exponent of its best characteristics. It must, of course, be conceded that he had an instinctive dislike of whatever was ugly and undisciplined—most modern music would have shocked him—and also that his music does not touch the heights or depths, as does that of Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner. Fortunately or unfortunately for him, his life was free from the want and privation, the struggles and difficulties, which other composers had to face, and which doubtless brought to their music an element of passion and intensity which is lacking in his. But depth and intensity are not everything,

and there is in Mendelssohn a wealth of engaging melody, an all-round variety of utterance, a skilful but unobtrusive mastery of technical resources, and above all a never-failing and all-pervading happiness, which are all his own, and which the world could ill afford to lose.

His music is like a well-ordered garden, bright with many-coloured flowers, and laid out in trim beds of orderly design. The sun is nearly always shining, and the rain-clouds pass overhead only to vanish again. Even the sea, which laps the lawn, is never more than pleasantly tempestuous; and on the few occasions on which the thunder mutters—as in the *Allegro* of the Scotch symphony—it is well up in the hills. Also, in the twilight, the fairies are wont at times to frolic at his bidding, *which they will do for no other German master!* Why quarrel with such a garden because it is not a wilderness, a torrent, or a mountain-top?

Mendelssohn is sure to be re-discovered sooner or later, and to be restored to his proper place amongst the great composers. And it is for the gramophone and wireless, those twin evangelists of to-day, to hasten the time of recognition. Let us, then, have more Mendelssohn on the records. Vocalion has given us the Italian Symphony (K.05148-50), but where, oh, where, is the Scotch? Come, H.M.V.—in one of your convenient albums! Parlophone has done the Violin Concerto (E.10175-78), but in a preposterous order, and we should like to hear it from one of our own leading violinists—Sammons, Isolde Menges, or Jelly d'Aranyi. The *M.N.D.*, *Hebrides*, and *Ruy Blas* Overtures have frequently been recorded, though never (I think) quite satisfactorily, but the *Calm Sea* and *Prosperous Voyage* (Polydor B.20246) and *Fair Melusina* are equally charming. Then there is the chamber music. One of THE GRAMOPHONE's able reviewers, in noticing "the delightful Mendelssohn Scherzo," issued by H.M.V. along with their Debussy quartet, was fain to add, "I confess I am unfamiliar with the music." Quite so; because it is scarcely ever performed. Anyone, however, who will spend a leisure hour in perusing Mendelssohn's quartets, quintets and octet will assuredly be—as the hairdressing advertisements say—"surprised and delighted"! Only the early quartet in E flat, with the *Canzonetta*, has been recorded (Voc. D.02062-3). What an opportunity is here for Columbia and the Lener players! Perhaps it is too early in the history of choral recording to expect a complete version of the *Elijah* or *Hymn of Praise*, but, now that the organ can be reproduced, let us hope for the speedy appearance of some of the organ music, of the *Fourth Sonata* as a beginning, or the *Prelude and Fugue in C minor*.

*Bis dat qui cito dat.*

[In the intervening months since this article was written, little has been done to fill the gaps. Apart from some organ records, the Columbia version of the *Piano Trio in C minor* played by Sammons, Tertis and Murdoch was the only serious addition to Mendelssohn instrumental records till the present issue of the Violin Concerto, played by Kreisler in mid-February: but the Piano Concerto in G minor, played by Moisevitch (H.M.V., D969-971), has been overlooked by our contributor. The *Allegretto* and *Finale* from the Fourth Organ Concerto, played by Dupré, were reviewed in the November issue.—LONDON ED.]